

THE EASTER FESTIVAL AT CATANIA.*

BY MRS. A. F. LAW.

EASTER-EGGS! Easter-eggs! This joyful exclamation is repeated among all people on this day of Thanksgiving—which, at the same time recalls the magnanimous sacrifice of the Son of God—and the miraculous resurrection of the Saviour of men. After the mournful week which commemorates the sufferings of our Lord, the joyful day of His ascension arrives, to inspire all hearts with thankfulness.

Those pretty eggs, so gracefully adorned, so brilliantly colored—you all have them, my dear friends—some more, some less. Grandpapas, grandmamas, all ages, all sexes pay their tribute of praise to you. It seems that France, and all Europe are gay to-day!

Wherever one casts his eyes, may be seen red eggs, yellow, and blue eggs. One cannot imagine whence comes this variegated mass for sale in the shops of the fruiterer. The confectioners have sugar eggs, filled with pastiles: some are ornamented with figures and garlands; others are loaded with devices, and placed on elegant beds of rushes and feathers, which quite resemble birds-nests. At the jeweler's they are made of precious stones encased in gold, and in imitation of hen's or pigeon's eggs; these gifts are probably intended for the children of the king.

But to speak only of the natural egg—drawing, painting, engraving—each lends the aid of her art. I have seen some eggs which were of admirable workmanship. Two particularly; one embellished with a Calvary miniature—and another, on which the artist had written the entire history of the Passion.

Paris is not the only city which celebrates Easter-day; there is not a country, nor a city professing the religion of Christ, where it is not marked by less or greater splendor. At present, I wish to give you an abridged history of the *Festival of Easter* at Catania, such as it occurred in 1839.

This town, built nearly at the foot of Mount Etna, has its streets paved with the lava of the volcano, cut into large flags. The splendid palaces—the rich convents—that of the Benedictines among others; its cathedral incrustated with sculpture, and paintings by the greatest

masters; its squares, and streets at straight angles; the antique and curious monuments which adorn the *Piazza Reale*: a colossal elephant, bearing upon its back an obelisk of redish granite; the pleasing manners of the inhabitants, and also the mild climate, make Catania a delightful place of resort, appreciated by the caravans of travellers who visit it every year, to ascend the crater—the name given in that region to the proud rival of Vesuvius.

Easter Monday, after grand mass, the young population of Catania emerge from the village in detached groups. Little boys in brown vests, with red embroidery, their heads crowned with Phrygian bonnets—white or black—falling over the ear in quite a coquettish manner; little girls with the hair raised up in the form of a fan, with gold or pinchback pins confining it; the petticoat and neckerchief of green or violet color—the apron plain, of printed calico, or of muslin; crimson stockings, embroidered at the edges; and shoes with plain rosettes of riband; these gay costumes agree with their sprightly looks.

These charming little coquettes, carrying with them bread and fruit, their hands filled with baskets, in which reposed eggs of varied hues, took their course toward the hermitage of Frate Francesco. This good anchorite is a religious octogenarian: he has—for half a century—inhabited a grotto among the rocks which form the base of Mount Etna; and his reputation of sanctity is spread abroad throughout the country. A crucifix, an image of the Madonna, and an altar of rough workmanship, are the ornaments of his lodging; figs, olives, dried fruits, bread and water, constitute his nourishment; and a stone bench is his bed.

To arrive at this hermitage, one must follow a path shaded by myrtles, rosebays, fig and almond trees, frequently interrupted, however, by barren tracts of lava, which, interspersing the rich landscape, have the same effect of contrast as the glaciers bending over the flowery pastures of the Alps.

Frato Francesco had seen many generations of children crowd into his peaceful abode. It was an old custom of the country to desire him to bless the Easter-eggs. He expected his young flock, each year, on the same day, and at the

* From the French of L. Auguier.

same hour; and they loved to listen attentively to his counsels and teachings.

We are now before the hermitage. The clock strikes, and the children are assembled around the venerable priest. He relates to them in an energetic and artless manner, the sufferings of Jesus to redeem us from our sins; he stirs up their zeal, excites their gratitude, and each of his words borrows a new degree of persuasion—from his bald forehead inclined toward the ground—and his long, snowy beard, an emblem of the winter of his life. Then, extending his thin and trembling hands over these young people, and the little treasures they present to him, he supplicates for all who surround him the blessing of heaven.

After this touching ceremony, the graceful troop go, as swiftly as their fragile charge permits them, to the *grand Prato*, a meadow, or field which extends for several leagues; not verdant, nor enameled with flowers like the others, but covered with a rough and half dried grass. The thickly growing palms and lofty aloes with which it is shaded—the muddy and deep water of the *Giaretta*, which, commencing at the south, terminates its serpentine course at the extremity of the bay of Catania—and the ardent sun which darts its rays upon a barren soil, would give this place in summer an African aspect, without the loud voiced gnat, formerly terrible, but now silent.

However, our young Catanians have chosen a

suitable position for their diversions; they disperse on this carpet, although it is rather rugged, and the game of eggs commences in many places at the same time.

Here, it is the game of the *tocca*. They clash the eggs together, and there are laughs, cries, and jumps of joy as each shell breaks. At another place *course*, hundreds of eggs are disposed in lines, three paces distant from each other; the player must while dancing gather them together, and place them in a vase without breaking a single one; sometimes to add to the difficulty, they agree that they shall be taken by odd or even numbers. Further off are little children writing their names with eggs, in letters from five to six feet long. Others empty their eggs by medium of slight openings, making garlands of them by stringing them on silk. Some, with great labor, build castles or pyramid of eggs, in order to destroy them as soon as they are finished, by throwing the largest and hardest on these impromptu tenements. Others make circles of eggs, and jump over them with their feet joined.

It is difficult to give—without having seen it—a just idea of the charming tableau—the animated picture presented by the *Prato* at this hour, with its thousands of eggs spread on the grass, displaying the bright colors of the rainbow, together with the beautiful children, with jet black ringlets disordered by the summer wind, jumping, laughing and sporting, all occupied with the grand affair of the day—the feast of eggs.

A DOMESTIC TRAGEDY.

BY EMILY H. MAY.

BERTHA STANHOPE believed that in marrying the Hon. Mr. Merivale, then a statesman high in his party, she had united herself to a man who sincerely loved her. It was not long, however, before she discovered that his attention had been chiefly directed to the large fortune of the heiress, whose hand he had obtained. She felt this disappointment keenly, but a source of consolation was ere long opened to her, and in her devotion to her first-born son, she forgot the neglect and indifference of her husband. The love of the young mother was still further augmented by a new and painful trial. The child was seized with an alarming illness, and for nearly a month she endured all the tortures of suspense. By the mercy of God, however, the disease took a favorable turn, and little Maurice recovered rapidly.

The joy of the wife and mother on seeing her son resorted to her, was so great, that it seemed to leave no room in her heart for any feeling unconnected with him. She beheld in the past only the fearful recollection of his danger; in the present the delight of seeing him once more joyous and robust; in the future the fear lest his health should again fail. Bertha's whole life was passed in watchfulness over his physical welfare, or in terror if she perceived in him the slightest symptoms of indisposition. Compared with the cause of her present solicitude, the greatest sorrows of her past life appeared to her but as trifles altogether unworthy of interest. So long as she was under no apprehension for her little Maurice, she was content. If she went out, it was on his account; if she came home, it was still for him. It was the one engrossing principle of her life, and rendered her completely indifferent to all besides.

While the wife, her whole heart thus filled by an absorbing passion, was happier than she had ever been before, the husband was tortured by political anxiety, and engaged in what appeared to be a losing struggle against powerful adversaries.

Merivale beheld the decline of his power with feelings of anguish almost as bitter as those with which Bertha had watched by the sick-bed of her son. His days were passed in disappointment, defeat, and mortification; his nights in sleep-

lessness. He became gloomy and morose, and his character acquired a harshness hitherto foreign to it. His subordinates approached him in fear and trembling, and quitted him almost always with irritated or wounded feelings. He appeared to have lost all his former self-command, and on the slightest opposition, would give way to the most undignified ebullitions of temper, while the fever of his mind produced an uncontrollable restlessness.

Bertha, absorbed in her maternal anxieties, had no suspicion of her husband's sufferings. Accustomed as she was to take no part in his affairs, she looked upon political interests as altogether beyond the sphere of a woman, and never sought to afford him any consolation under troubles which she was powerless to avert, which she did not even understand, and of the importance of which she was consequently unaware.

Meanwhile an anniversary recurred, which hitherto, whatever might have been his political engagements, the husband had not failed to celebrate; namely his wife's birthday.

Early in the morning a present was brought to her, consisting of a bouquet of white camellias, which were her favorite flowers, together with a picture in a richly-carved ebony frame, and admirably executed, representing the old homestead which was the birth-place of Mrs. Merivale.

Bertha recollected having one evening expressed a desire to possess a sketch of the spot connected with all the recollections of her childhood, and much touched by this attention to her wishes, she hastened to her husband's study to thank him warmly. He did not at first understand her. Neither the bouquet nor the picture were from him. He even acknowledged having entirely forgotten that it was his wife's birthday.

This confession chilled Bertha's heart, and destroyed the pleasure caused her by the mysterious present. From whom, then, could it come? Who could have remembered her wish, and gratified it with so much delicacy?

"But who was present when I spoke of my old home?" There were her cousin James, Mr. Fremicourt, Mr. Stuart, and her friend, Mrs. Howe. "Could it be you, Mary?" asked she in the evening of the latter.

Mrs. Howe acknowledged that the bouquet and picture came from her.

Bertha made no answer, and during the rest of the evening she remained thoughtful and sad. This proof of affection had sunk deep in her heart, wounded as it was by the neglect of Merivale. She could not free herself from these painful thoughts, and the whole night long she brooded sadly over the kindness of Mrs. Howe and the indifference of her husband.

When she rose the next morning, however, these ideas were but too quickly dispelled. Her son appeared to be unwell. She hoped, and so did the doctor, that it was a mere trifle, which rest and a careful diet would easily set to rights. But her hopes were disappointed; far from diminishing, the ailment assumed a more serious character, and the poor mother recognized, or fancied she did so, some of the symptoms of the illness with which her little Maurice had been attacked a few months previously. She imparted her fears to the doctor, who did not share them, and to her husband, who paid little heed to them. They were both accustomed to her imaginary terrors on her son's account, and looked upon her gloomy forebodings as the result of exaggerated anxiety. Bertha, reassured by their arguments and by their security, endeavored to lay aside her fears; but this she found to be impossible. It was in vain that she repeated to herself that the opinion of the most celebrated physicians, and, above all, that of her husband, must have more foundation than a woman's fears. The symptoms which were declared to exist only in her own imagination, appeared to her to be obvious and incontestible.

Two days later, her husband and the doctor could no longer deny the illness of the child. They were alarmed, but they did not despair. Once before, Merivale had saved his boy from a similar danger, and he desired that the same means which had then proved efficacious should be again adopted. The little invalid began to exhibit manifest signs of improvement, and one morning he stretched out his arms to his mother, and for the first time for a whole week raised his heavy head from the pillow.

While his anxiety on his child's account detained Merivale from his post, his affairs were assuming a more and more alarming aspect. Congress had adjourned, and the new elections were to take place almost immediately. Great agitation prevailed throughout the whole country; the different political parties had assumed an attitude of hostile opposition, and nothing was heard of but pamphlets, plots, counterplots, attacks, and recriminations. Being

now reassured concerning the state of his son, Merivale returned to the direction of affairs, resolved, as became the leader of a party, that if he fell, it should be at the head of his followers.

One morning after a sleepless night, he was gloomily reflecting upon the difficulties and dangers of his position, when Bertha's maid entered his room.

"My mistress is very unwell, sir," said she, "and I thought it my duty to inform you of it. She sat up all last night with her child, and she is very anxious and unhappy about him. Yesterday she sent me five or six times in the course of the evening to see if you were come in, and to beg you would come to her. She has now fallen asleep from fatigue, and I thought it best to let you know, sir, in case you might please to take this opportunity of seeing the child without alarming my mistress, for the poor little creature appears to me to be very ill."

"You were quite right, and I am much obliged to you, Fanny," replied Merivale; "I will come to my wife's room directly. Is the child awake?"

"He seems very much exhausted, sir, but he has not slept these two days. His eyes are never shut, and he keeps up a perpetual low moaning."

Merivale rose to go to his wife's apartments. He had already reached the threshold of the room, when he heard the sound of a carriage driving at full speed to the street door.

He approached the window. A coach stopped at the door, and a man sprang hastily out of it. Merivale uttered an exclamation of surprise, as he recognized a devoted partisan.

There must of necessity be some mighty reason for Mr. Sands' appearance, for the worthy man was not likely to undertake an expensive journey, which broke through all his habits, and removed him for a time from the district which he inhabited, and never willingly quitted without sufficient cause. Merivale was endeavoring to divine what could be the object of the old man's visit, when the latter burst into his study with all the eagerness of youth.

"You must return with me immediately," exclaimed he, without further preamble. "By a day, or even an hour's delay, we risk the loss of everything."

"Of everything!—of what do you mean?"

"Of your election," replied his partisan, whose reply was a thunder-clap to Merivale.

Hitherto, whatever might have been his political anxieties, he had never dreamed that there could be a doubt on the subject of his election. He looked upon it as certain that his native town and county, proud of being represented by a man

of such distinction, and above all, by a party leader would re-elect him without opposition. The tidings imparted to him by Mr. Sands mortified him deeply. Not that he feared a defeat, but he was angry that the idea of bringing forward another candidate in opposition to him should ever have been conceived.

"And who is my opponent?" asked he, in a tone of contempt.

"A formidable one, for he is an old inhabitant of the place, wealthy, and possessed of considerable influence."

At this moment the maid again entered the room.

"My mistress entreats you to come to her, sir," said she.

"I am coming," replied he. Then turning impatiently to Mr. Sands, he inquired: "And who is this wealthy and influential man?"

"Mr. Howard."

"Sir, my mistress is in the greatest distress, and again implores you to come," said the maid once more.

"My son is ill," said Merivale to Mr. Sands, "I am going to my wife, who is in the greatest alarm; when I have reassured her, I will return to you, and we will set out immediately together."

Mr. Sands established himself in an arm-chair, and Merivale went to seek his wife. He found her bending over the cradle of the child, and gazing upon him with a countenance of despair. The two doctors who attended the boy were standing beside her, with looks of perplexity and consternation. A glance sufficed to reveal to Merivale the full extent of the peril.

The doctors exchanged with him a look of dismay.

"The inflammatory symptoms are assuming a very serious character," said one.

"The breathing is becoming difficult," added the other.

"The fever has increased."

"He is delirious."

Merivale laid his finger on the child's pulse and counted its throbbings. There was no hope now, science and skill were alike powerless to arrest the progress of the disease. He endeavored to conceal his anguish, for Bertha, her eyes fixed upon his face, seemed endeavoring to read his inmost thoughts.

"You will yet be able to cure him?" cried she, in a tone of agony. "You have already saved him once, Merivale; he will owe you his life this time also, will he not?"

"He does not need my care," replied Merivale, with painful embarrassment. "These gentle-

men," added he, turning to the doctors, "will continue the treatment which they have pursued so skilfully."

She turned upon him a look of astonishment and dismay.

"You will not leave your child? you will not leave me, Merivale? If you go away, it seems to me as if you would take with you my boy's life. When you are here I am calm and hopeful, but in your absence I feel nothing but terror."

"That is mere superstition," said he, endeavoring to force a smile.

"No matter; do not leave me, Merivale; you have saved him once, and I feel that the same happiness is reserved for you this time also."

Merivale hesitated, not knowing what to do, when Mr. Sands' silvered head and keen countenance appeared at the door. He made a sign to Mr. Merivale to lose no time.

"You will stay, will you not? Oh, thanks! thanks! If you knew what I suffer alone here, without any one to comfort me, watching my child, perhaps on his deathbed! Merivale, your presence gives me strength."

He gently disengaged his hand, which she had clasped within her own. Mr. Sands redoubled his signals.

"An affair of the utmost importance compels me to leave you. My absence will not be long. Nothing but a positive duty——"

"Oh, Merivale! do not leave me! Can any duty be more positive than that of remaining with your wife and with your child at such a moment? To leave us now will be to kill us both."

Mr. Sands impatiently drew out his watch.

Mr. Merivale made a movement toward him.

Bertha fell at her husband's feet, and clasped his knees.

"Merivale! Merivale! stay! I will not let you go till you have sworn to me upon your honor not to abandon my son. For the sake of your child have pity upon me!"

Mr. Sands glided behind Merivale.

"Time presses," whispered he; "every moment costs us a vote."

Merivale pressed his lips to the forehead of his wife.

"I shall soon come back," said he.

Mr. Sands made his escape.

She rose and placed herself in front of the door.

"You shall not go," said she; "or if you do, you must first trample under foot a despairing woman, the mother of your dying child. She has no hope but in you; and would you forsake your son?"

"I have no need of any one to teach me my

duty," said Mr. Merivale, harshly, for he was disgusted at his own meanness; and, being angry with himself, sought, as is too often the case, to find cause of anger with another, in order to escape from the reproaches of his own conscience. "If I acknowledged the necessity of remaining with the child, do you suppose it would be needful for you to urge it upon me? My assistance is useless here; urgent calls summon me elsewhere, and I obey them."

"You shall not go! you shall not go!" cried Bertha, scarce knowing what she said, and clinging to her husband.

He sought to put her aside.

"No! no! stay! stay!"

He disengaged himself from her hold, not without some violence, thrust her from him, closed the door behind, hastened to rejoin Mr. Sands, to take his place beside him in the chaise, and to call to the coachman to drive on as fast as his horses could gallop.

"Oh, sir, stop! my mistress has fainted away," cried the voice of the terrified maid from the window of Bertha's room. But the sound of her voice was drowned by the rattle of the wheels; Mr. Merivale did not hear it, and Mr. Sands, who did, took care to say nothing on the subject to his companion.

When Bertha saw her husband forsake her and his child, when he thrust her so unfeelingly from him in order to follow Mr. Sands, and sacrifice his duty to his family to the calls of ambition, she went and resumed her place in silence, by the cradle of her son. She felt and understood from that moment that it was all over with the poor little child, and that she must lay aside every shadow of hope. The countenances of the physicians, during the visits which they paid every half hour to the little sufferer, confirmed her in this terrible conviction. Bertha no longer questioned them, no longer implored them to save her son. With feelings of anguish which words are inadequate to describe, she waited there in silence. How fearful for a mother thus to await the death of her child! Her eyes fixed upon the countenance, once so bright and joyous, to watch the gradual extinction of life. Poor little fellow! his lips were parched, the breath rattled in his throat, his features were stiffening beneath the cold grasp of death. The physicians no longer attempted to afford relief—all was useless now; they gazed with compassion upon the mournful scene, and withdrew without uttering a word.

The child's breathing became fainter and fainter, until at length complete silence reigned in the room. His mother bending over him could scarcely detect, at intervals, an almost im-

perceptible breath upon her cheek, which proved to her that the struggle was not yet over.

At length she felt nothing more. She sank down upon her knees, clasping her hands in almost delirious agony.

When she was raised from the ground a covering had been drawn over the corpse, and two persons were kneeling and praying beside her. They were her friend, Mrs. Howe, and the latter's husband.

She exchanged a rapid glance with them, and then turning to the cradle, raised the veil which concealed the corpse, and stood mournfully contemplating it in a silence unbroken by her friends, the only witnesses of this painful scene, from which the servants had respectfully withdrawn.

Suddenly she appeared to awake, as if from a painful dream.

"He is not dead?—surely he is not dead?" she murmured. "I must be sleeping—tormented by a fearful dream. My child! my son! surely God cannot have taken him from me. He would not take a child from his mother!"

She took the little corpse in her arms, laid it on her lap, and began rocking it gently. The child's limbs were already stiffening, and its extremities had become icy cold.

"He does not move!" cried she; "he is cold! he is dead! he is dead!"

Mr. Howe and his wife endeavored to take from her the remains, and to remove her from a sight so painful. But she resisted all their efforts, and resumed:

"He is dead! and his father might have saved him, as he had already done once before. He is dead! and it was his father who trampled him under foot: who forsook him without hesitation. His power, his position, or I know not what, was at stake! and what mattered it if the child died? What are a mother and a child when compared to interests of such magnitude? What is a despairing woman, who, on her knees implores the life of her child from him who holds it in his power? She is thrust rudely aside, and he departs. He leaves her alone to watch the death agony of her child, and it dies! Look here! look here! and behold the work of a husband and a father! A corpse upon the lap of his mother?"

"A curse upon him!" exclaimed Mr. Howe, whose wife strove to silence him by placing her hand upon his lips.

"Suffer your husband to speak," cried Bertha. "He but expresses my own feelings," continued she, laying her hand upon the head of her child. "Standing by the corpse of my son, I implore the

vengeance of God upon his crime—it must not remain unpunished. If the law cannot reach it eternal justice has its judgments, and the world its scorn for the infanticide. For myself," added she, "never again will I behold the murderer of my boy."

"For God's sake do not listen to the counsels of your despair," pleaded Mr. Howe.

She replied by a smile—but such a smile.

"I have no child now—I have no husband—I am alone in the world!"

At break of day Bertha rose from her knees and went to the window, which she opened. The fresh morning air, laden with the sweet odors of spring, entered the chamber of death, and a little bird began to sing cheerily. Bertha drew the cradle close to the window, and fixed a gaze of painful intensity upon her child. He seemed to be sleeping sweetly. She fetched his prettiest clothes and began to deck him with them. Mrs. Howe gathered some flowers in the conservatory, and returned with a crown of white roses, which she placed on the head of the little corpse whose angel spirit had been recalled to heaven.

The undertaker brought from the adjoining room an ebony coffin lined with white satin. Bertha looked at him with a bewildered expression, but not a tear moistened her burning eyelids. She laid the child in the coffin, and strewed around him the flowers which Mrs. Howe had brought together with the crown. Then she chose from amongst his playthings those that had been his favorites, and laid them at his feet.

This done, she sat down beside the coffin, and remained in a kind of stupor until the funeral crowd began to gather. At sound of the footsteps she shuddered, rose, and stretched out her arms toward the coffin, striving to utter some words which her white lips seemed unable to frame. God at length took pity upon her, and she sank senseless on the floor.

While Mrs. Howe was to her assistance, Mr. Howe placed a lace veil over the child's remains, closed the lid of the coffin, screwed it down, and taking it in his arms, carried it to the hearse.

When he returned Mrs. Merivale was beginning to recover; she looked with astonishment upon those around her, and appeared to have forgotten everything, until her gaze rested upon the empty cradle of her son. Then she recollected the truth, her heart sank within her, and she again fainted away.

After three days Mr. Merivale returned. All his ambitious hopes had been defeated.

"My wife! my child! where are they?" asked he, anxiously.

"God has had mercy upon her," replied Mrs. Howe, who was kneeling in tears beside Bertha's bed: "He has reunited the mother to her son."

It is said that in the asylum at Bloomingdale, is a maniac, who believes himself to be the President, yet who is constantly crying aloud for his wife and child.

He tells his name to no one. But, on the books of the institution, it appears as Merivale.

THE ORPHANS FROM THE ALMS-HOUSE.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by Edward Stephens, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

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CHAPTER VII.

MARY FULLER was aroused from her sleep, the next morning, by the most heavenly sound that had ever met her ear. It was a wild gush of song, from the birds that had a habit of sleeping in the old trumpet-flower vine and among the apple trees back of the house. She began to smile even in her sleep, and awoke with a thrill of new and most delicious pleasure. Out from the old porch and distant trees came this wild gush of song, to which the river, with its soft chiming, made a perpetual accompaniment. She drew a deep breath tremulous with pleasure and reluctantly opened her eyes.

Aunt Hannah was standing before a little, upright looking-glass, combing out her long grey hair with a ferocious-looking horn comb, which she swept through those sombre tresses deliberately as a rake gathers up hay from the meadow. The paper curtains were partly rolled up, and one of the small sashes was open, admitting a current of fresh air and the bird songs together. These two blessings, which God gives alike to all, aunt Hannah received as she did her daily bread, without a thought and as a necessary thing: but to the child they made a heaven of the little attic chamber. This was not alone because habit had familiarized one to a bright circulation of mountain air and mountain music, and the other to the sluggish atmosphere and repulsive scents inseparable from the poverty-stricken districts of a city. Organization had more to do with it than habit. Mary, with her sensitive nature, never could have breathed such air, or listened to those melodious sounds without a feeling of delight such as ordinary persons never know. Thus it happened, while aunt Hannah was busy, twisting up her hair and changing her short night-gown for a calico dress, that Mary closed her eyes again, and a tear or two stole from beneath their long lashes.

Aunt Hannah just then came to the bed, with both hands behind, hooking up her dress. She saw the tears as they stole through those quivering

lashes, and spoke in a voice so stern and chill that it made the child start on her pillow.

"Home-sick, I reckon?" she said, interrogatively.

"No, no," answered Mary, eagerly, "it isn't that, I haven't any home, you know, to be sick about."

"What is it then?"

"Oh! the bright air, and the sweet noises all around, it seems so—so—indeed I can't help it. Is there another place in the wide world like this?"

"Well, no, to my thinking there isn't," said aunt Hannah, looking around the room with grim complacency, "but I don't see anything to cry about."

"I know its wrong in me, ma'am, but somehow I can't help making a baby of myself when I'm very happy—don't be angry with me for it!"

"I don't like crying people, never did," answered aunt Hannah, tersely, "tears never do anything but mischief, and never will—wipe your eyes now, and come down stairs."

Mary drew a little hand obediently across her eyes. Aunt Hannah, starting up, went down a flight of narrow steps that led to the kitchen; and the child could hear her moving about among the fire-irons as she put on her clothes. Still there was joy at her heart, for the birds kept singing to her all the time, and when she rose from her knees, after whispering over her prayers, they broke forth in such a glee of music, that it seemed as if they knew what she was about and rejoiced over it.

When Mary descended into the kitchen, she found aunt Hannah on her knees, between two huge andirons, fanning a heap of smoking wood with the checked apron, which she tightened at the corners around each hand. The smoke puffed out in little clouds around her, with every wave of the apron, and floated off in fantastic wreaths over her head. When Mary came down, she turned her face over one shoulder with an inclination toward the door, and the words, "You will find a place to wash by the rain-water trough," issued from amid the smoke.

Mary found the huge trough standing full of soft water, to the left of the back stoop. On one end where the wood was thick, stood a yellow earthen wash-bowl, with a square piece of soap, of the same color, lying by it.

To a child of Mary's habits this rustic toilet was luxurious. Standing upon a piece of plank, that protected her feet from the damp earth around the trough, she bathed her hands and face again and again, drawing in deep draughts of the bright air between each ablution, with a delicious sense of enjoyment.

"That's right—you are beginning to find out the ways of the house, darter. Grand old trough, isn't it?" said uncle Nathan, issuing from the porch, and turning back the cotton wristbands from his plump hands, as he came up to where Mary was standing. "That's right. Now for a good wash."

Mary hastened to cast the water away that she had been using, and fill the bowl afresh for uncle Nathan, before he reached the plank on which she stood. Then she resigned her place, and running into the stoop, wiped her hands and face till they were rosy again on the roller towel, that she had observed hanging near the cheese-press.

"Now, what must I do next?" she said, confidentially, as uncle Nathan claimed his turn at the crash towel, "I want to be of some use, please tell me how!"

"That's right," said uncle Nathan, patting her head with his wet hand, "run, hang over the tea-kettle, set the table, sweep up a little. You can do chores, I reckon."

"I don't know what are chores."

"Oh! a little of everything," replied the old man, laughing his deep, good-natured laugh.

"Oh! yes, I can try at that, any way," cried the child, and her laugh stole through the mellow fulness of his, much as the bird-songs mingled with the flow of the river. "I'm a good deal stronger than I look!"

"Bright as a dollar, and smart as a steel-trap. I knew it. Them eyes weren't made for nothing. Now run and begin; but look here, darter; don't plague Hannah with questions; just make yourself handy; and no fuss about it, you know."

"Oh! I can do that, you'll see," cried the girl, cheerfully, and while uncle Nathan was polishing his broad face with the towel, she seized a heavy iron tea-kettle and carried it to a well, which, surrounded by plantain and dock leaves, stood near a corner of the house. She had some little difficulty in managing the windlass, and when the old mosey bucket fell with a dash into the water twenty feet below, it made her start and

shiver all over, as if she had harmed something.

I am afraid she never could have managed, with those little hands, to have drawn the bucket over the well curb; but while she stood trembling like a leaf, holding back the windlass with both hands, and gazing desperately on the bucket, down whose green sides the water-drops were raining back into the well, good uncle Nathan came up, panting with the exertion, and seizing hold of the bucket jerked it over to the curb.

"Don't try that again; it's rather more than you can manage yet," he said, breathing hard, "I was an old Ishmaelite to put you up to it."

"I thought it was easy enough," said Mary, trembling with affright and the overtax of her strength, while uncle Nathan filled the tea-kettle and bore it into the porch, "next time I shall know how better."

She took the kettle from the old man's hand, and bending her whole strength to the task, bore it into the kitchen.

Aunt Hannah was still on her knees, blowing away at the obstinate green wood, that smoked and smouldered at its ease. When Mary came tottering under the weight of her kettle, and hung it upon the trammel-hook just over an incipient blaze, the old lady gave her a keen glance, as much of surprise as pleasure, and working vigorously with her apron, sent a whirl of smoke into the child's eyes, while her lips muttered something that sounded like "nice girl."

It was quite wonderful how the little creature found out all the ways of that old house so noiselessly! While aunt Hannah sat, knife in hand, stripping the skins from her cold potatoes, and cutting them in round slices that dropped hissing one by one into hot gravy, which, with their slices of pork, simmered in the frying-pan which she had just taken from the fire, Mary had drawn forth the little cherry wood table, found the table-cloth of bird's-eye diaper in one end of the drawer, and knives and forks in the other, which she proceeded to arrange after the fashion she had observed the night before.

Aunt Hannah turned her head now and then, after stirring up her potatoes, and held the dripping knife above the frying-pan, while she gave a sharp glance at these proceedings, quite ready to impart a brief reprimand should the case require it. But each glance grew shorter, and at last those thin lips relaxed into a look of grim satisfaction, when she saw the little girl measuring a drawing of tea in the top of her tin canister, leveling it nicely off with the edge of a spoon handle, not a grain more or less than the usual allowance. Aunt Hannah was not a close

woman in the usual country acceptance of the term, but she hated changes and loved tea. That old canister lid had been the household standard for thirty years, and it was not likely that she would heartily sanction any addition or diminution for a little girl like that.

At length the breakfast was ready. The slices of salt pork were neatly arranged on a plate; and the potatoes crisped to a turn, were placed beside it on the hearth. Between them stood a plate of milk-toast and the little pewter tea-pot, puffing threads of steam from its puny nuzzle, as if it really intended an opposition to the great salamander of a kettle that sung and fumed and made a great ado over the hot fire back in the chimney. Just as everything seemed ready for breakfast, uncle Nathan came in, obedient to a nod from his grim sister, and seating himself before the fire, opened the Bible and began to read.

It was a temptation to worldly thoughts, that warm breakfast, so savory and appetising to a child whose appetite was stimulated with exercise and the fresh mountain air, and I do not pretend to say that once or twice she did not wonder a little if uncle Nathan always read so slow or prayed so long. But it was a passing thought, and, as uncle Nathan said afterward, "she couldn't help birds flying over her head, but that was no reason why they should build nests in her hair." In this case, naughty thoughts were like the birds, and if she drove them away, that was all that could be expected. Uncle Nathan was a good old man in his day and generation, and we have no idea of criticising any opinion of his.

When the breakfast was over, aunt Hannah disappeared from the back porch, with a milk-pail in one hand and a three-legged stool in the other. Uncle Nathan followed her example, but more slowly, and the cotton handkerchief of many colors that his sister had tied on her head, disappeared over the back garden fence before he had half crossed the cabbage patch. He lingered behind long enough to give Mary an encouraging smile through the kitchen door, and went off murmuring, as if in confidence to his milking-stool, "Nice girl, nice girl, I wonder we never thought of taking a little thing like that before. If Hannah had only kept poor Catharine's baby now, what company they would have been for each other."

When the good man reached the little pasture lot, thinly scattered over with apple trees, in which a half dozen fine cows grazed over night, he found aunt Hannah beneath one of the largest trees, seated upon her stool, and milking what she called the "hardest" cow of the lot. When

disposed to be refractory she cut its "tantrums" short with a sharp "soh!" that went off from her thin lips like the crack of a pistol; and this one word always had more effect upon the animal, than a world of uncle Nathan's gentle "so-ho, so-hos," that always seemed as if he was quieting an infant. The vicious animal knew the difference well enough, for one was usually followed by a crack of the stool over its ribs, while the other sometimes resulted in leaving the rotund old gentleman wallowing, like a mud-turtle, on his back in the grass.

It is natural to suppose that under these circumstances, uncle Nathan usually gave a wide berth to his sister's favorite; but this morning he drove the meekest and fattest cow of the herd gingerly up to the old apple tree, and after placing his stool very deliberately on the grass, and the pail between his knees, began a slow accompaniment to the quick motion of aunt Hannah's hands, which kept two pearly streams in rapid flow to the half filled pail resting against her feet. While the milk rattled and rushed upon the bottom of his empty pail, uncle Nathan kept quiet, leaning his head against the cow and thinking over the pleasant ideas that little Mary had aroused in his kind heart. Unconsciously wishing to share these thoughts with his sister, he had driven his cow close to hers that they might converse together. Hannah took no notice of his presence, however, but went on filling her pail so rapidly, that it began to foam over the edge. When her brother saw this, and knew by the soft, feathery sound that she had nearly finished, he stooped down, and with his dear old face just visible under the cow, called out,

"I say, Hannah, what do you think of her?"

Did the vicious animal start? Or what was it that made the stern woman shriek out, and wheel round so sharply on her stool?

"Why, Hannah, did I frighten her? has she kicked again?" cried uncle Nathan, surprised by the sharp action and wild look that she cast back upon him.

"Yes, she did start," answered aunt Hannah, rising and taking up the pail, now quite full, which made her waver to and fro, a singular weakness which no one had ever witnessed in her before.

"But you ain't frightened, sister; nothing can frighten you," said Nathan, soothingly.

"No, but you asked something, what is it."

"Only, how you liked her?"

"Her!—who?"

"Why, Mary Faller, our little girl, you know."

"You are thinking of her then."

"Why, yes, Hannah, I can't think of anything else. Isn't she a nice little creature?"

"Yes!"

"How handy she was about the breakfast, I shouldn't wonder now if all the dishes are washed up by the time we get back."

"Do you think so?" said aunt Hannah, gazing down into her foaming pail so steadily, that even uncle Nathan could see that she was not thinking of anything so trivial as her morning's work.

"Hannah," he said "what has come over you? you seem so strange since this little girl came. You scarcely speak."

"Do I ever speak much?" she answered.

"No," said uncle Nathan, with a sigh, "but now something has gone wrong—what is it? don't you like to keep the child?"

"Yes, I like it."

"She will be a help to you?"

"Yes, I think so—of course she must."

"And company for me—for us both?"

"For you, yes—as for me, brother, I have no company, good or bad, but my own thoughts."

She spoke with some feeling, her voice shook, her hard eyes wavered as they turned toward her brother. In twenty years Nathan had not seen her so moved. Why was it? What was there in the coming of a helpless child beneath their roof, to disturb the composure of a woman like that? As the good man sat upon his stool, pondering over these thoughts, for he was too much surprised for speech, she hung her stool upon a limb of the apple tree, and moved toward the house, stooping more than usual beneath the weight of her milk-pail.

As uncle Nathan had prophesied, Mary was as busy as a humming-bird washing up the breakfast dishes, and putting everything to rights in the kitchen. Aunt Hannah did not seem to observe it, but strained her milk, and went out again. When she came back, uncle Nathan was with her, looking rather grave and perplexed.

It was now approaching nine o'clock, and all the "chores," as the good couple called the household work, "were done up."

"Go up stairs and get your things," said aunt Hannah, addressing Mary, "it's school time."

"Mary obeyed, and aunt Hannah proceeded to change her checked apron for one of black silk, and to invest her head in a straw bonnet, that had been tolerably fashionable ten years before, since which time it had been often bleached, but never changed in form.

She took Mary by the hand, when she came down, with her plain mantilla and cottage bonnet on, surveyed her keenly from head to foot, and lead her into the street.

They passed down the village, the woman not deigning to notice that she was an object of curiosity, the child shrinking with that sensitive dread of observation, that always haunted her when among strangers. About the centre of the village stood a brick academy, with an open space before it, and surrounded by a wooden verandah.

Aunt Hannah entered the lower story of this building, where some forty children were assembled under a female teacher, who came forward to receive her visitors.

"This little girl," said aunt Hannah, "we have adopted her. She must come to school."

"What branches do you wish her to study?" inquired the teacher.

"Reading, writing, cyphering, enough to reckon up a store bill, if she should ever have one, and enough of geography to keep her from losing her way in the world."

"Is that all?" said the teacher, "a girl of her age ought to know all that, without further teaching."

"Like enough she does, ask her," said aunt Hannah.

The teacher looked at Mary, who smiled, blushed, and after a moment's hesitation, said, modestly.

"I know how to read and write, and a little of the rest."

"Very well, I will examine you presently," said the teacher "yonder is an empty desk, you can take it."

Mary advanced up the school-room, blushing and trembling beneath the amazed and half-mocking glances that followed her. So sensitively conscious was she of her deformity that every movement, when curious eyes were upon her, brought its pang. But with true heroism, she subdued all appearance of the pain she felt; and in her very meekness and fortitude there lay a charm that won more worthy affection than beauty could have done.

Thus she entered upon her school life, alone and among strangers, for aunt Hannah left her at the door. She looked around with a forlorn hope that Isabel might, like her, be sent to school, or that something might happen to take the sad weight of loneliness from her heart; but all was new, cold, and depressing; and leaning her head on the desk, she felt chilled in all her veins. There was no disposition to weep in little Mary now.

Sensitive as she was, no one ever saw her shed tears over her own sorrow; but kindness, poor child! that always brought the dew sparkling up from her heart to her eyes.

CHAPTER VIII.

BUT we cannot follow this strange child through her school life, so monotonous and yet so full of incident, or what seemed such to her inexperience. The studies that she undertook were singularly broken up and independent. Indeed, I much doubt if regular methodical teaching can ever be applied to a nature like hers. The god-gifted of earth—and of this rare class was Mary—generally study through the taste and heart. Certain it is, little Mary Fuller, whom no one understood except it may be Enoch Sharp through his acute observation, and uncle Nathan through his great warm heart, had pretty much her own way, and oftener studied poems and histories from Judge Sharp's library than anything else even in the school-room. Thus her mind grew and thrived in its own rich fancies: and in the wholesome atmosphere of the old homestead, her heart expanded and lost nothing of its native goodness. It is wonderful how soon the scholars forgot to gaze at her crooked figure, or smile when she made an awkward movement, if anything is wonderful which genius and goodness has power to accomplish.

BUT we, anticipating the work of time in these reflections, we cannot have the history of these two children in detail, but by snatches, which give the reader an idea rather than a narrative of this portion of their lives. We could follow Isabel Chester to her sumptuous home; sumptuous, and yet replete with that discomfort, which a vain and selfish woman is certain to bring upon a household when placed at its head. We could describe the incongruous richness of her rosewood bed, and the delicate lace curtains that shadowed her beauty every morning, till the sun was high in the heavens and the dew exhaled from the earth. Step by step it would be easy to detail the elegant selfishness in which the innocent child was trained, by the half educated and really low-bred woman, who had adopted her more to indulge a caprice than from a generous impulse. But these details would render our story tedious. Besides, a few events happened even in the monotony of a country life, which will convey a true idea of their progress. A week had elapsed and Mary had heard nothing of her little friend, nor ventured to hint at the keen desire to see her which grew stranger every day. One night when this wish was like a home-sick longing, and the child sat silent and drooping by the kitchen window, she heard a sweeping sound among the cabbage-heads, and peering keenly out saw a shadow moving through them. Mary's heart began to leap, and as the shadow dis-

appeared round a corner of the house; her eyes were turned bright with expectation toward the back door. A footstep sounded from the porch, followed by a light tread that seemed but the faintest echo of the first.

Slowly, step by step, and holding her breath, Mary crept forward. Aunt Hannah, who was making a cotton garment, which from its dimensions could only have belonged to uncle Nathan, looked at her through her steel spectacles with the needle glittering sharply between her fingers, and pointed toward her with its thread half-drawn.

Mary stopped short and remained in the middle of the floor. A pointed bayonet could not have transfixed her more completely. There was a slight noise at the door as of some one feeling for the latch, but uncle Nathan who was just lifting his head from a doze, took it for a knock and called out with sleepy good nature,

"Come in—come in."

"Gracious me, ain't I trying to come in?" called a voice from the porch. "Why on airth didn't you keep to the old string latch, one could always see light enough through the hole to find the string by, but this iron consarn is just about the most tanterlizing thing that I ever did undertake to handle so."

As this speech was uttered, the door swung open, and Salina strode into the kitchen, leading Isabel Chester by the hand.

"There now, just have a kissing frolic, you two young uns, and be over with it, while I shake hands with aunt Hannah and uncle Nat," exclaimed Salina, pushing Isabel into Mary's outstretched arms. "There now, no sobbing, nothing of that sort. Human critters weren't sent on earth to spend their time in crying. If you're glad to see each other, say so, take a hug and a kiss, and then go off up stairs or into the porch, while I have a chat with uncle Nat and aunt Hannah, if she's got anything to say for herself."

The children obeyed her. One glad embrace, two or three warm kisses, and they crept away to the porch delighted to be alone.

"Now," said Salina, drawing a splint bottomed chair close up to uncle Nathan. "You hain't no idea, uncle Nat, what a time I've had a getting here with that little critter. She cried and pined, and sort a worried me till I brought her off right in the teeth and eyes of madam. Won't there be a time when she misses us?"

"Why wouldn't she let the little gal come to see her playmate?" asked uncle Nathan.

"Playmate—well now, I'd like to hear Madam Farnham hear you call her that, she'd want to

tear your eyes out. But Lord a mercy, she hain't got animation enough for anything of the sort, if she had, a rattlesnake wouldn't be more cantankerous to my thinking. She's got all the pison in her, and hisses it out like a cat: in my hull life I never did see such a cruel varment."

"Then Mrs. Farnham don't want her girl to come here, is that it?" inquired aunt Hannah, setting the gathers in a neck-gusset with the point of her needle, which she dashed in and out as if it had been a poinard, and that cotton cloth her enemy's heart.

"You always hit the nail right on the head when you do strike, aunt Hannah. She don't want her gal to come here, nor your gal to come there, that's the long and short on it."

"What for?" inquired uncle Nathan, moving uneasily in his great wooden chair. "Isn't our little gal good enough?"

"Good enough, gracious me, I wonder if she thinks anybody in these parts good enough for her to wipe her silk slippers on? Why she speaks of Judge Sharp as if he was nobody, and of the country here as if God hadn't made it."

"But what has she agin that poor child?" inquired aunt Hannah, sternaly.

"She's crooked, and she came from the poor-house, isn't that enough?" answered Salina, stretching forth her head, and counting each word down with a finger into the palm of her hand as if it had been a coin. "She's crooked, she came from the poor-house, and more than all, she lives here."

"So she remembers us then?" said aunt Hannah, resting the point of her needle in a gather while she studied her hand.

"Yes, you are the only people she has asked about, and her way of doing it was snappish enough, I can tell you."

"I have not seen this woman in eighteen years," said aunt Hannah, thoughtfully, "we change a good deal in that time."

"She hasn't changed much though: fallen away a little; her red cheeks have turned to a kind of propery white; her mouth has grown thin and *meachen*: there's something kind o' lathy and unsartin about her; as for temper that's just the same, only a little more of it, sharp as a muskeeter's bill, tanterlizing as a green nettle. The rattlesnake is a king to her, there's something worth while about his bite, its strong and in arnest, it kills a feller right off; but she keeps a netting and harrering one about all the time, without making an end on't. I wish you could see her with that poor little gal, dressing her up as if she was a rag-baby, scolding her one minute, kissing her the next, calling her

here, sending her there, I declare its enough to put one out of conceit with all woman kind."

"Where is Mrs. Farnham's son now?" inquired uncle Nathan, to whose genial heart the sharp opinions of his visitor came unpleasantly, "he ought to be a smart young fellow by this time."

"I don't know who he'd take after then," observed the housekeeper, drily.

"His father was an enterprising man, understood business, knew how to cake care of what he made," said uncle Nathan. "We never had many smarter men than Farnham here in the mountains!"

"Farnham was a villain!" exclaimed aunt Hannah, whose face to the very lips had been growing white as she listened.

Uncle Nathan started as if a shot had passed through his easy-chair.

"Hannah!"

The old woman did not seem to hear him, but lowering her face over her work sewed on rapidly, but the whiteness of her face still continued, and you could see by the unequal motion of the cotton kerchief folded over her bosom, that she was suppressing some powerful emotion.

Uncle Nathan was not a man to press any unpleasant subject upon another; but he seemed a good deal surprised by his sister's strange manner; and sat nervously grasping and ungrasping the arm of his chair, looking alternately at her and Salina, while the silence continued.

"Well," said Salina, who had no delicate scruples of this kind to struggle with, "you do beat all, aunt Hannah; I hadn't the least idea that there was so much vinegar in you. Now Mr. Farnham was kinder related to me by his first wife, you know, and I'm bound to keep any body from raking up his ashes in the grave."

"Let them rest there—let them rest there!" exclaimed aunt Hannah, slowly folding up her work. "I did not mean to speak his name, but it is said, and I will not take anything back."

"Well, nobody wants you to, that I know of: it's a kind of duty to defend one's relations, especially when they can't do it for themselves: but after all, Mr. Farnham only married my second cousin, and I don't know as it's any business of mine, what you call him."

"I remember seeing his first wife once," said uncle Nathan, striving to shake off the heavy feeling that his sister had created. "It was when he brought her up here from Connecticut, a while after they were married."

"Nobody saw her very often after that," said Salina, shaking her head, "she pined away after that, and went off like spring snow. I remember

this time well, for she brought me with her for company; I was a little gal then; Farnham hadn't made all his money, and he was glad enough for me to settle down and do his work. But it was awful lonesome, I can tell you, after she was gone; and I used to go down into the grave-yard, and set down by her head-stone for company, till spring time came, and then your sister came to help spin up the wool—wasn't she a harnsome critter?—your sister Anne."

Aunt Hannah seemed turning into marble, her face and hands grew so deathly white; but she heither moved nor spoke.

Uncle Nathan did not speak either, but he pressed both hands down on the arms of his chair, and half rose; then fell back as if the effort were too much; and with one faint struggle sat still, with the tears of a long buried grief stealing down his cheeks.

"Well, what have I done wrong now?" asked Salina, looking from the tearful old man to the pallid sister, and shaking her head till the horn comb trembled among her fiery tresses.

"We haven't mentioned Anne's name between us in more than fifteen years; and it comes hard to hear it now," answered uncle Nathan, drawing

first one plump hand and then another across his eyes.

"I didn't mean any harm by it," answered the housekeeper, penitently, "but she was a sweet, purty critter as ever lived; and no one felt worse than I did when she died in that strange way."

"Hush!" said aunt Hannah, standing up, pale even to ghastliness. "It is you that rake up the ashes of the dead—ashes, ashes——"

The words died on her pale lips; she reached out her hands as if to lay hold of something; and fell senseless to the floor.

Salina seized a pitcher that stood on the table, rushed out to the water trough and back again, so like a spirit, that the two little girls in the porch broke from each other's arms and shrieked aloud. But they recognized her when she came back and stood trembling by the door, while she dashed the contents of her pitcher both over the fainting woman and the kind old man that knelt over her.

It had no effect. Aunt Hannah opened her eyes but once during the next hour. Neither the cold water nor the old brother's terror had power to reach the buried pulses of her life.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FRED'S RIDE.

BY DI VERNON.

"WELL, did I ever?"

"What's the matter now?"

"One of Di's capers—that's all."

"What has the witch been doing?"

"Yes, sir! what have I been doing? something you wouldn't *dare* do, I'll engage. I have been riding Wild Tom."

"Wild Tom!" And his eyes opened with surprise. You must know that Fred was a kind of a "Miss Nancy"—and a great coward, especially in regard to horses. He wouldn't mount such an animal on any account—nobody could make him.

"Wild Tom! and didn't he break your neck?"

"You see," Di replied, bobbing her head up and down to show that all was secure.

"Fred!" she folded her arms and looked innocently into his face.

"What?"

"Aren't you ashamed to be such a coward? Afraid of a horse! oh, fie! Come, arouse! pluck up your little stock of courage and accompany me this afternoon. You can have old Dolly, *she's* like a lamb, so quiet. Come, *I'll take care of you.*"

Ashamed of his weakness, Fred stammered out something by way of refusal—but meeting the sarcastic smile of the saucy girl, he colored up and said, "Well, I will go if you'll behave, and give me a quiet horse."

"Good! George Washington Stubbs! (to the old colored man) saddle the black mare for Mr. Fred, and Wild Tom for me, directly."

"Yes, Missy—I does it in a minute," and away he went grinning like a jackanapes.

"Now, Di, if anything happens me," whined Fred.

Just imagine the sort of look the heroic Helen McGregor cast upon Bailie Nichol Jarvie, when he begged and prayed for life, and you will have some idea how Di looked upon the pusillanimous Fred.

"If anything happens you," said she, mimicing, "didn't I tell you *I'd* take care of you, you big baby?" And Di turned to the glass to adjust her riding-cap, a sneer curling her lip, while Fred drew on his gloves with the air of a man going to be hung.

"De horses, Missy—dey am here," said George Washington, putting his sable face in the doorway.

"Come and assist me to mount, if you happen to know how," cried the lady to the young man, as he turned to leave the hall. Fred never got affronted at anything Di chose to say to him—and he slowly followed her out. Wild Tom was a beautiful mottled grey,

"With a high arching neck and a nostril spread wide,
His eye full of fire and his step full of pride,"

and as Di patted him affectionately on the face, he neighed her a greeting. Dolly was a stupid-looking, though well-formed and sleek animal—and in her younger days had been a racer—but now she was only "slow and sure."

"There! I knew you didn't know how to place me on the saddle—go way! I'll get on myself. Here, Wash! help that gentleman to mount, and don't grin quite so much. We all know you've got good teeth without your showing 'em all the time."

"Golly! Missy, you'ee so funny! yaw, yaw, yaw!"

"There you are again! Well—now we're mounted," said the mad-cap, waving her arm, and pointing ahead—"now, forward! to the rescue!" and with a bound like a frightened antelope, away went Wild Tom and his wilder rider.

"So, ho, gently!" cried Fred, as Dolly, pulling hard on the bit, began to scramble after her companion. But, the more he wanted her to go

slow, the more she wouldn't, and as Wild Tom flew onward like a bird on the wing, Dolly, becoming excited, increased her speed with the intention of coming up to him. I have no doubt the good mare was quite astonished to find she *could* run so fast in her old age—but I think poor Fred was more astonished than she, as he felt himself going faster and faster every moment, his head bowed down, like John Gilpin, the reins hanging loose, and his hands clinging to the saddle-bow, expecting each instant to be thrown on the road and his brains (?) dashed out against a stone. Di kept on—looking now and then behind her with a roguish laugh, and urging her steed still faster. Away thunders Wild Tom over the good plank road, right gallantly he! and well done black Dolly! she comes it grandly for an old one. Take care, Fred! you're getting tired—your face is wondrous pale, you tremble. "Di! Di! Di-i-i!" That voice rings plaintively on the air—it sounds to her very much like the bleating of a sheep—"Stop, Di, stop!"

"Well, what do you want?" she cried, drawing in her steed.

Dolly having come up, stopped too, puffing like a locomotive. "Oh, I'm nearly killed—I'll get off——"

"No, no, don't! We'll go back immediately. Why, it's nothing when you get used to it. She's very quiet, I'm sure."

"Yes, *very quiet*," gasped Fred, pulling his cap

over his eyes with one hand, while the other still grasped the saddle. "Oh, dear, how quiet we *all* are!"

Di was delighted. He *was* getting mad—he *could* get mad—she began to have a better opinion of him. But she wasn't done with him yet. "Well, we'll go home then—come!" and turning her horse, she slyly gave Dolly a smart cut of her whip, and away went the whole posse like the sweep of an avalanche.

"If you've got a wild horse," said Di, keeping alongside of her companion, who never looked up a moment, "just let him *run*—that'll soon quiet him."

"Ye-e-s—I should think—so," gasped Fred—"can't you—go a little——"

"*Faster?* To be sure. Hi! Tom, hi!"

"Hold on! Ho! Di-i-i!"

No use. None so deaf as those who won't hear. Wild Tom *flew*, and Dolly did her best. It *was* a sight!

"The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, 'well done!'
As loud as he could bawl."

And it was well done—for when Di drew up at her father's gate, Dolly and her clinging rider were but a short distance in the rear. Fred slid off the saddle nearly shook to pieces, and without a word took his way toward his own home. He did not soon forget his first ride.

LOVE AT FIFTEEN AND TWENTY.

BY CLARA MORETON.

La vie est un sommeil, l'amour en est le reve."

THERE was never a lovelier girl than my old schoolmate, Emma Thornton. Our teachers could not disguise their partiality to her, but even that fruitful cause of disturbance did not excite my jealousy in this instance, for every scholar in school loved Emma. Her father was so wrapped up in her, that it never entered his head to marry again, although Emma's mother had died when she was but a child; and yet, petted and caressed as she was by every one, she was not in the least spoiled.

Fred Stanley, a wild, rollicking young Sophomore, the very opposite of our gentle Emma, was her teacher in one more study than her father had stipulated for, when he placed her under the care of the Misses Gibbs, whose boarding-school was in dangerous proximity to the college grounds. But then, the school was said to be under stricter discipline than any one in the city, and for that reason nicknamed "The Nunnery" by the students.

So closely were the young ladies watched, that under ordinary circumstances no danger could have been apprehended; but Fred, who had a sister at the same school, had caught such glimpses of Emma's fair young face, as to play the very mischief with his susceptible heart, and he was at his wits end to devise some stratagem, whereby a more satisfactory acquaintance could be effected.

Miss Lucinda Gibbs, whose love for the science of botany, caused her to keep an herbarium, was at length, through this same fondness, the unconscious means of bringing about the desired result. Fred made himself so useful in collecting and classifying her specimens for her, that she gradually grew to depend upon him for every other little form or attention that she might require. With the greatest alacrity he accompanied Miss Lucinda and her train of boarders to the evening prayer meetings, satisfied if he could obtain a seat where he could see and worship his idol, while the rest, it was to be hoped, were engaged in their proper devotions.

Emma needed not the help of Ellen Stanley to inform her of the state of her brother's heart, for she could read it in his eyes without any assistance. He was her first admirer, and she

was sufficiently young and romantic to suffer herself to become interested, before she had the least knowledge of the qualities of his mind and heart.

At length, Stanley was so privileged as to be allowed to accompany the school in their Saturday afternoon rambles into the country, and then as the girls separated one from another, flitting here and there through woodland walks and shaded meadows, many and glorious were the opportunities which he had for making love, and right earnestly did he set about it. If Miss Lucinda came suddenly upon them, nothing was easier than to appear completely absorbed in an explanation of the various parts of the wild flower that he held in his hand. He was never without one; and Miss Lucinda considered him such a devotee to her favorite science, that she never even mistrusted the least partiality toward any of the human flowers she had in charge.

Oh, those were halcyon days to Fred and Emma. Those stolen glances, those whispered interviews, the thrilling clasp of the quickly withdrawn hands, and once—shall I tell it?—the long, long kiss in the windings of that dark forest that skirted East Rock, upon whose bold summit the entire school had passed such a delightful day.

Thus, the mischief was accomplished, and thereafter Emma made wonderful progress in her new study, to the utter exclusion of all her old ones. Her teachers wondered that she should have so flagged. They noted her absent moods, the dreamy expression of her soft blue eyes, and fearing lest she might be pining for her father, they proposed to her a short visit home before the expiration of the session.

Of course, Emma would not listen to it, and so the weeks glided on until vacation came; and then with many promises of eternal love and constancy, Fred and Emma parted. The gentle girl who had left her father's home, a child in thought and feeling, returned to it with the heart of a woman throbbing in her bosom.

About a week after Emma's return, Mr. Thornton was sitting in his library reading the morning papers. Emma, with an open letter in her hand, entered the room, and drawing a low

stoal to her father's feet, sat down upon it. She had never had any secrets from her father, and she was not going to begin now.

"Well, Emma," said Mr. Thornton, laying aside his paper, "what does my little girl want this morning?"

For a wonder, our amiable Emma was half inclined to pout, just at that particular moment, being called a "little girl" did not exactly suit her. She summoned all her dignity to her aid, and answered, "I have something that I wish to tell you, papa, if you are disengaged and can listen to me this morning."

"Certainly I can—what is it, child? No quarrel with your schoolmates, I hope, that you look so serious?"

"No, no—nothing of the kind. It is a secret that I know I ought not to keep from you, papa. You see, although you will call me a little girl, I am not such a *very* little one. At least, *somebody* does not think so."

"*Somebody!* who the deuce is *somebody*?—your room-mate, I suppose."

"Oh, no; but there is no use in making a mystery of the matter. I am engaged, papa."

"Engaged! what does the girl mean? Why, Emma, stand up, and let me look at you. Engaged! I'll shoot the rascal that dared to make love to such a child as you are."

"Oh, no, papa; you'll do no such a thing. When you see him, you can't help loving him, he has such a brave, noble face—he is so very——"

"Aye-e-e," interrupted Mr. Thornton, "can't I help it? It will be harder work to keep my hands off from him. Confound him! A *very* interesting young man, I have no doubt—at least, a *very* interested one. He does not know, I suppose, that you will have a fortune at my death—oh, no, nothing of the kind. I tell you what, Emma—I take too much pride in you, to let you throw yourself away on one of these college scape-graces, as I doubt not he is, for no man of sense would fall in love with a girl just entering her teens."

"I have been in them three years," said Emma.

"Oh, well, three years are nothing. When you are twenty, then we'll talk about your being engaged. Here, give me that letter. I'll answer it for you; and if after that, the scoundrel dares to make another attempt to steal my treasure, I'll send you to a nunnery—I will as sure as I'm your father."

Emma had never seen her father so decided before. She respected him too much, and loved him too well to offer any resistance; so she gave up her precious letter, and went to her chamber

to weep over her blighted hopes. Never did love-lorn damsel draw more touching pictures of a desolate future.

The same hour Mr. Thornton wrote, despatching his letter to the address Frederic had given Emma, and destroyed the one Emma had received.

There came no answer. Not thus easily had Emma expected to have been yielded up: but she convinced herself that Stanley's pride had prevented him from renewing his addresses, and she resolved that she would be as strong and uncomplaining as he.

Emma Thornton returned no more to boarding-school. Her father provided her with masters, and kept her under his own surveillance. At eighteen, she made her first appearance in gay society. Her exceeding beauty would have rendered her sufficiently attractive; but added to that, she possessed a well cultivated and brilliant mind, and the greatest refinement and grace of manner. Wherever she went all hearts paid her homage, but Emma turned coldly away from her suitors. Her father was in despair when he found her refusing so many eligible offers, for he began to feel the necessity of her having some younger protector than himself; but all his reasoning and expostulating availed naught.

There came a time, however, when Emma was no longer so careless and indifferent. A young lawyer of acknowledged talent, and one already occupying a prominent place in society, was the first admirer in whom Emma took the least interest since the days of her girlish love. At the step of Carlton Howard her pulse learned to beat more quickly, and she could scarce subdue the traces of emotion which his deep, rich tones never failed to call forth. Still, she so well disguised her feelings that he gleaned no encouragement from her manner; and knowing her reputed coldness, he felt little hope that his suit would ever prove successful. Yet he persevered in his attentions, determined if it were possible to win some portion of the love he so coveted.

Emma felt flattered that one of his superior attainments should so evidently find pleasure in her society. She acknowledged that his conversational powers were more brilliant, his acquirements more varied and extensive, his manners more polished than those of any other person that she had ever met with. Her father had asked her what more she could desire. She had made no answer, but the dream-like memory of her first love floated into her heart, and she went away by herself to nurse it in solitude as she had often done.

Weeks passed, and her reserve and coldness

gradually gave way to a more cordial manner. At length Howard gathered confidence to breathe his tale of love. More worthy of admiration than ever did he seem to Emma at that time. His dark grey eyes, always singularly expressive, now revealed their depths of tenderness, while his earnest words told of a heart strong in its devotion.

Emma, as she listened, felt her own heart beat and throb, as never had it throbbed but once before. He paused once, twice she essayed to answer, but the words died on her lips.

Again Mr. Howard spoke. "I have pained you, Miss Thornton," he said, "by my abrupt avowal this morning; but you will give me one word of hope, will you not? If you cannot return my love, say at least that I have your esteem, and not one effort on my part shall be wanting to become more deserving of an increased regard."

"I do esteem you, Mr. Howard. I can truly say that I feel more interest in you than I have ever felt save for one. Had I never met—that is, had I——" Emma paused. Her cheeks were painfully suffused. Every word that she attempted to say increased her embarrassment. This gave Carlton Howard the advantage, and calmly with gentle words he tried to reassure the blushing girl. He was so successful that little by little her confidence was entirely given to him, and Howard felt more than ever encouraged when he found that it was only the memory of a love at fifteen that he had to do-battle with.

Two weeks afterward Emma was a second time betrothed, but it was with the full understanding that her lover should never quarrel with the memory of that first love.

There was never a more beautiful bride than Emma Howard—never a happier husband than Carlton, or a father better pleased with a daughter's choice than was Mr. Thornton.

Every one agreed that for once the course of true love had run wonderfully smooth.

A year passed away, and Howard found that he was quite right in considering Emma's first attachment as a mere girlish fancy. Although when he noted a shade of unusual seriousness upon her brow, he would jest her about the privileged memory, he was long ago convinced that the deeper waters of her heart had been moved only for him.

And yet it must be confessed that Emma frequently recurred to the romantic attachment of her school girl days—not with the yearning tenderness that she once had felt, but with a desire to know something of Stanley's after life—a wish that she might find that his fate had been as

happy as her own; confessing to her husband the relief that it would be to know that he had not died of a broken heart.

One lovely spring afternoon, just on the verge of evening, Carlton Howard and his wife were sitting by an open window in their cool and pleasant library, when a servant entered with a card, which he handed to Mrs. Howard. She glanced at the name—it had been years since she had seen that handwriting, and the color came to her cheeks as she read aloud "Frederic Stanley"—then flitted back as rapidly until they were as pale as the white flowers of the vine that clung for support to the trellis about the window.

"What shall I do, Carlton? what shall I do?" she said, hastily.

"Go down to him, love," he answered. "My own wife is not afraid that she will lose her heart again. I know too well how much it is my own to have any fears myself."

Emma stooped down, resting one snowy hand amidst the masses of raven hair which was swept back from his broad white forehead, and kissing him tenderly, said, "Your exceeding love, Carlton, gives me confidence in myself, but you will certainly come with me."

"No, Emma, I would rather not—it would be more awkward for you—no, go down, love," he continued, pushing her gently from him; but marking the tears in her eyes, he added, "if you so desire it, I will follow you presently."

Emma's heart beat painfully as she descended the staircase, and she stood for a moment beside the parlor door to reassure herself. It was in vain—her agitation momentarily increased. At length, summoning all her courage, she entered.

The servant had lighted the gas, and from the porcelain shade the softened light fell upon a figure very unlike the one in Emma's imagination.

Burly as a — beer barrel I had almost said—the comparison seemed so apt in more respects than one—was the Mr. Stanley before her.

With a coarse laugh, he arose from his seat.

"Shouldn't have known you, 'pon honor, Miss Thornton—Mrs. Howard, I mean—he, he, that seems odd too. How you have changed; but then I have altered *some*, haven't I?"

"Very much, I should think," answered Emma, in a freezing tone.

All the fluttering about her heart had vanished, but there was a mighty revolution going on there nevertheless—the enshrined ideal was crumbling into dust.

"You haven't forgotten how I used to look, have you? why, I often think about the curly-headed girl that liked to cry her eyes out wher

we parted—it'll never be as hard parting again, I warrant," and Mr. Stanley laughed merrily at the (to him) pleasing reminiscence.

"Is this your first visit to the city?" inquired Emma, in hopes of changing the current of his thoughts.

"No. I was here six years ago with my wife; but you see she wouldn't listen to my looking you up; so as it was our wedding trip I gave up to her, but yesterday I came on from New York to attend the races, and having nothing to do this afternoon I concluded to hunt you out. I always have felt a kind of curiosity to see you again, for although I have been in love a dozen times since, I couldn't forget you entirely. I expect if the old man hadn't interfered you'd have been Mrs. Stanley—he, he, it's a very funny the way things turn up in this world, isn't it?"

Emma's face was crimson. She now hoped from her heart that her husband would remain in the library, for his presence would only increase her mortification. But it was not long before she heard his step upon the stairs, and very awkwardly when he entered did she introduce them.

"You must not let me interrupt your reminiscences," said Mr. Howard, as he drew his chair into the centre of the room, "as you were old schoolmates, I presume you have many very pleasing ones."

"Ah, we were something more than old schoolmates," replied Mr. Stanley, laughing. "Did your wife never tell you how near we came making a match? ha, ha—'a miss is as good as a mile,' however, and I expect we are both about as well suited—eh, Mrs. Howard?"

Mr. Howard cast a mischievous glance at his wife, and seeing how painfully embarrassed she appeared he answered for her.

"I, at least, Mr. Stanley," he said, "am much rejoiced that the match was broken, for I expect I should still have been a wandering bachelor, had I not found the realization of my dreams in Miss Thornton."

The spirit of mischief was strong in Mr. Howard, and he felt disposed to draw Mr. Stanley still further out upon the subject, but catching an appealing glance from his wife, he adroitly introduced another topic of conversation.

Mrs. Howard began to breathe more freely when she saw how deeply interested Mr. Stanley became in giving a minute description of the races, and discussing the merits of the different horses and their riders; but he interspersed his conversation with so many slang phrases, that Mrs. Howard, more than ever disgusted, made some trifling excuse and left the room.

It was full an hour afterward when her husband entered the library where she was seated, and, throwing himself upon a lounge, laughed until tears stood in his merry eyes.

Emma was of course too thoroughly vexed to join in his laughter, and she showed her irritation by turning her shoulder a trifle more toward him.

Mr. Howard tried several times to speak, but his hearty laughter drowned his words.

He at length succeeded in saying, "Don't turn from me so, Emma darling." Here was another laugh which made Mrs. Howard turn her back completely around.

"Indeed, I cannot help it; you must excuse me, Emma," he found breath to say at last.

Still his mirthfulness was in no way checked, even when she arose and swept indignantly from the room: but as soon as he was able to compose his countenance he followed her.

"Come, Emma—I don't want to hurt your feelings, my dear, but you must let me enjoy——"

"*My mortification*," said his wife, interrupting him—tears standing in her eyes.

"No, by no means. You put a wrong construction upon my merriment. Come, dear wife—come back to the library with me. You have yet to hear the best part of the joke."

He encircled her waist with his arm as he spoke. She could not resist the tenderness, and she suffered herself to be led back to the room she had so petulantly deserted.

As she resumed her seat, she strove hard to conquer her feelings, but the tears of vexation would creep up into the corners of her eyes; and she found it impossible to disguise the annoyance that she felt at her husband's mischievous glances.

"If we want to be very good friends, Carlton," she said, at length, "and live as happy as we have done heretofore, there must be no allusion after to-night to this provoking occurrence. Promise me, now, that you will not tell father."

"You are too hard upon me, Emma—indeed you are. He would enjoy it capitally; and why need you care?—you have done nothing for which you are to blame."

"But think how vexatious."

"I do believe, Emma, that you are chagrined, because he consoled himself so speedily for your loss. Let me see, it was one of your anxieties, if I remember, lest he should die of a broken heart."

"Carlton, you are too bad. I really think you are unkind to tease me so," and Mrs. Howard's pretty lips quivered as she spoke, and the tears rolled down her face, until her husband compas-

sionately drew her head down upon his breast, and by his continued efforts succeeded in making her look upon the ludicrous occurrence with as much merriment nearly as he had done.

He detailed to her the conversation which had passed between them after she had left the room—how Mr. Stanley had made him a confidant of his losses at the races, the consequent depression of his finances, and his need of a loan, which Mr. Howard had the more readily advanced,

inasmuch as divining his companion's character, he saw at a glance that he could thus effectually rid himself of an acquaintance that might otherwise prove troublesome.

He was right. Mr. Frederic Stanley was never after seen nor heard from by any of the family.

Although Emma still feels a little chagrined when any allusion is made to her first love, yet she fails not to relate her experience to those whom she thinks it may profit.

MATTHEW NEIL'S MISTAKE.

BY FANNY SMITH.

ANNIE NEIL'S simple lullaby of "hush my babe," was often lowered into a mere humming of the tune, as she rocked the cradle with her foot, and took up the highly glazed envelope, to scan the direction and re-read the note of invitation contained therein.

Little Frank was at last fast asleep, and with a whispered injunction to Nancy to "jog the cradle, if baby moved," off she tripped to look over stores of wreaths, satin slippers, and her wedding dress, to see what she would have suitable to wear at the grand party.

"I know Matthew will go *this* time," argued the young wife to herself, "the Wards are great friends of his. Let me see—he thinks I look best in blue; I guess I'll get a light blue brocade, and have it made so I can wear my Honiton. How kind of Matthew to give me those expensive laces for a Christmas present. He likes to see me well dressed, and I know he won't object to the brocade, for he's doing such a good business now, and I haven't had an evening dress since I was married." And with a light heart, Annie Neil turned over the flowers, trying on a wreath or spray now and then to see which would be the most becoming.

The little wife possessed a deal of tact. She had a practical knowledge of the English adage, which says that "a hungry man is an angry man," so she waited patiently till the soup and fowl were discussed, the dessert placed upon the table, and her husband's appetite somewhat appeased before she commenced.

"Matthew," said she, "the Wards are going to give a large party on Thursday night, and have sent us an invitation."

There was not a word, or look of encouragement on the face of the husband. She was going to add, "And I want you to give me a new dress for the occasion," and end it all with a kiss, but the stolid face prevented that, so she only said, "I expect it will be a very handsome affair, in honor of their new house."

"I know two people who won't be there," was the reply, as the knife went down with a snap through his mince-pie to the plate.

Annie said not a word, but the tears almost come, as she sat twirling the water in her goblet. So the dinner ended in silence. Matthew took

up his hat to return to his counting-room, and Annie went up to the nursery to play with little Frank whilst Nancy got her dinner.

But somehow the child missed the something in his mother. She did not entertain him with her usual light-hearted gaiety; her laugh was not so ringing when his block houses fell down; she did not "drive horsey" so actively as common; nor play "peep" with such laughing eyes as he had been accustomed to.

So Frank fretted, and *would not* be amused, and Annie Neil sighed, "oh, dear," and with a quivering lip said to herself, "I am glad I was spared the mortification of having the dress refused, at any rate."

And then in spite of herself, hard, though just thoughts of her husband, would intrude themselves. She even then did not know that her heart pronounced Matthew selfish, but she thought over the two years of their married life, and remembered that he had taken her a young, gay girl, from a large circle of warm friends; had refused to attend most of the bridal parties which had been offered to her, and had peremptorily declined every invitation since. Without intending it probably, he had withdrawn her from most of her young companions, whose society, he declared, was not worth having.

Poor Annie! She had a light heart, and was young enough, and tasted gaiety too seldom, now not to feel terribly disappointed at not attending Mrs. Ward's party.

The young wife had made up her mind to bear this little privation, as patiently as she had borne all the others, but, in spite of herself, her kiss was not so warm as usual, nor her voice so gay in its welcome, when her husband returned at night.

"Well, Annie! what kind of dress are you going to wear at Mrs. Ward's?" asked Mrs. Carr, Matthew's sister, as her husband and herself were spending the evening there.

"We are not going, Lizzy," was Annie's somewhat constrained answer.

Lizzy turned a quick, sharp look at her brother. "You mean Matthew *won't* go, I suppose," said she.

"Indeed I shan't," replied the brother, while a smile of contemptuous superiority curled his

lip, "how a sane man can spend an evening, at a fashionable party, is beyond my comprehension."

"That is not the only thing beyond your comprehension, I suspect," replied the high-spirited sister, as she gazed at Annie's youthful face.

"One never meets a person worth speaking to," continued Matthew, not noticing his sister's interruption, "nothing but a parcel of men and women dancing, and making fools of themselves."

"You must have a stupid set of acquaintance, and but little discrimination and ability to draw people out," was Mrs. Carr's retort. "There is no reason why you *cannot* talk as sensibly at a party as anywhere else. You meet the same set of men that you are so fond of smoking cigars with in your office, or so fond of talking with at your stag parties; and to one who likes to read characters by countenances, a good corner at a large party affords one not only amusement, but some insight into human nature."

"A man gets enough of all that through the day, and wants to rest quietly when he comes home at night," replied Mr. Neil, changing his ground.

Annie had heard a cry in the nursery during the discussion, and gone up to look after little Frank, so without the fear of creating trouble between her brother and his wife, Mrs. Carr went on,

"And don't you remember, Matthew, that your quiet, patient wife gets *nothing at all* of 'all that;' that a woman's mind stagnates by her constant confinement to mere domestic duties; with *no* recreations she loses all elasticity of mind, and at last becomes a mere head nurse and housekeeper to her children and husband. It would be equally wrong in Annie to want to go out *every night*, but surely you might make an *occasional* sacrifice. I tell you, Matthew Neil, what it is, were I in your wife's place, I'd go without you."

Mr. Neil opened his eyes, and laughed at the idea of his quiet, gentle wife thinking for herself, and going without him; so he shrugged his shoulders at his sister, and turned to Mr. Carr to ask about the last advices from Europe.

The night of the party came, and found Annie beside little Frank's cradle, trying in vain to read, whilst her husband was down stairs smoking a cigar with a friend.

Matthew Neil was not an unkind husband in the usual acceptance of the phrase, only a selfish one, but such men, if they care at all for a wife's love, are making one of the greatest mistakes of a life-time when they say, "It is only a trifle, and there are a great many more important things than going to parties."

Invitation after invitation was refused in the same peremptory manner, without once consulting his wife's inclinations.

With the usual generosity (perversity if you will, dear reader,) of woman's nature, had he but once have said to Annie, "We will go if you would like to," she would have instantly refused, and had more pleasure in the refusal than the acceptance.

The spring came and found the wife worn out, body and mind, with constant attention on her sick child. The frightful illness and trying convalescence was past, and now Annie longed for some relief from the wearisome routine of every day life. She longed for something that would arouse her from the train of sad thoughts which had assailed her in little Frank's room, but there never came a kind offer to drive her out for change of air, nor an invitation to go to a concert or a lecture, or the opera, and she was too proud to ask for what she feared would be refused.

But many and many a night during the child's recovery, had Matthew looked into the room and said, "Annie, Frank is so cross that I cannot stand it. As I can't do you any good, I think I will step into the theatre;" or else, "as long as you don't mind being alone, I'll go to hear *Sonntag to-night*, I think;" and the gentle reply would be, "Very well, Matthew," and then a burst of tears when he had gone.

Once during the child's illness, Annie had implored the husband to stay at home from a gentleman's party to which he was going, "I get so frightened when those spasms come on," she urged.

He replied that "the doctor did not think them so alarming; that Nancy could do more good than he could, even if he was there; that Annie was becoming as much of a baby as Frank; and that after the wearisome routine of business, he really needed some recreation." But he staid, nevertheless, sullenly enough to make his wife repent the request, and for weeks afterward spoke of his having to deny himself all pleasure on account of her nervous whims.

A change was slowly but surely coming over Annie Neil's love. It was no longer with an impatient waiting on the staircase, till she heard the latch key in the door, and then a quick flying to her own room, for fear he should know how foolish she had been, that she received him now; it was no longer a half-hour's study with her, whether her glossy hair should be curled or braided; it was no longer in selecting a dress that she asked herself, "which would Matthew like best;" it was no longer that a week's

absence on a gunning expedition was looked forward to, as if it would be an eternal separation; but her duties were all faithfully performed, and she was as gentle and patient as ever.

Annie Neil was no hypocrite. She could not feign the intense love she had once felt, and even if she had tried, her husband was too selfish, not soon to have detected the counterfeit.

"It is enough to make one dislike children," grumbled Matthew Neil, one night to his sister, "when one's wife's whole soul is wrapped up so in them, that the husband is a mere secondary consideration. I really believe Annie has not a thought to spare from Frank. She would a great deal rather sit in the nursery with him, than in the parlor with me. It isn't that he needs her care either, for Nancy is a capital nurse, and I have offered to hire another if she has not enough servants."

"Annie has been accustomed to the confinement of the nursery so long, that I suspect that she only looks upon herself as a head nurse," retorted Mrs. Carr, "but she must come to our party whether you do or not, that's settled."

There was not exactly the same satisfied smile on Matthew Neil's face now, that there was on the night on which Ward's party was discussed,

as he replied, "very well," for he felt that his wife was not the same unquestioning creature, that she was then.

And Annie *did* go to the party; and not only to that, but to others, and still others; to the opera, to the theatre, to concerts with her sister-in-law and Mr. Carr; and night after night, sometimes after spending a long, lonely evening, her husband heard her bid adieu to her laughing companions on the door steps, he thought how gay she was, to what she used to be, to all but him, and he sighed that now their roads were so separated.

There was a great, unsatisfied want now, in Matthew Neil's heart. From sheer desperation, he followed, rather than went with his wife into society; he almost sickened at her innocent gaiety; and at times, loathed his child on whom she bestowed such prodigal caresses. There was no lack of wifely *duty*. Annie was ever gentle and patient, a good housewife, and a faithful nurse in sickness; but the *warmth*, with which her love had touched all things, had gone. Her husband knew she loved no one else, but alas, he felt that she could never love him again, as she once had done, and to this day Matthew Neil is mourning over his **MISTAKE**.

ADA LESTER'S SEASON IN NEW YORK.

BY CARRY STANLEY.

PART III.

NEW YORK, March 31st.

My last letter, dear Maggie, apprized you of Anna Richards illness, I stood by her grave yesterday.

God help the poor mother who closes her eyes to-day on His glorious sunshine, because it so mocks her sorrows, she cannot realize as yet the rapturous awaking of her child on the bosom of the Saviour, that Saviour who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me;" she only feels that dark sorrow closing around her heart, deadening it to everything except a wish to lie down in the cold earth beside her dead and clasp it in her arms.

I sat up with Mrs. Richards the night that Anna died. I had called in the afternoon, and saw how it would be with the child before morning, and I could not leave that heart-stricken mother to wrestle with the dread terror alone. Through the long night Mrs. Richards sat by the bedside, perfectly immovable the greater part of the time; her face was stony in its agony, and there was not a tear to cool the burning of her eyeballs. Once she raised her eyes, and wailed forth the prayer, "*By Thy agony in Gethsemane, if it be possible let this cup pass from me.*" Her grief seemed at last almost unendurable, she paced the room with folded arms and bowed head, a groan now and then escaping her. The hours wore on thus slowly, because each moment seemed to add its weight of torture, quickly, because the mother was so soon to take the last look of her child.

I almost imagined, in the quiet of the dimly lighted room, that I could hear the stealthy footsteps of the Grim King creeping cautiously along, and I once came near screaming as I was startled from the preception of that almost *palpable* presence, by a fit of coughing from Anna. I was lying her down again after it was over, when she sprang up with such a wild, frightened, anxious look in her eyes that I was terrified. It was an expression that belongs only to the dying. Her mother raised her and pillowed her head on her bosom. A wan smile, but of an unearthly beauty of which you cannot conceive, illumined her face; a smile that was but the shadowy type of the

seraphic sweetness that brightens it now; and 'then she murmured forth, "It's growing—so—dark."

There was no wrestling with the great terror, dear Maggie; after that one imploring look, which seemed to ask us to save her, she was conquered; she spoke no more; and breathed but a moment or two; then all was over.

The poor mother is almost dumb from trouble. She is left alone now without a friend in the wide world. Her faith seems almost dead. "I had been so thankful for such a blessing," said she to me, when I called there this morning. "Every kiss on her brow had been a thanksgiving. She had been the child of so many prayers that I thought God *must* have had mercy on me, and spared me *one* to love."

I could not tell her then, dear Maggie, what she will know as soon as this veil of grief shall have been rent, and she will be again permitted to see the Holy of Holies—I could not tell her then that God *had* heard her prayers, and so in His mercy had taken her child from trouble to come, that hurtling storms, and racking pains, and hunger, and cold and *temptation* could no more assail her on the bosom on which she reposed; I could not tell her all this, which I so strongly feel, for my voice would be drowned now in the wild cry that is ever going up from her heart, "My child, my child."

I have written to mamma this morning to ask whether she thought we could not find permanent employment in our own and a few other families for Mrs. Richards. There is not a soul in this great city to help her in sickness or sorrow. She is a beautiful seamstress, and so quiet and unobtrusive in her manners that none need object to employing her. You know what difficulty we sometimes find to get sewing done, and if there is a tolerable certainty of her being engaged, I think I can induce her to go to C—. Exert yourself for her, in the name of humanity, my dear friend.

Mr. Blanchard, throughout all this trouble, has been most generous. One learns to revere a man like him, Maggie, in a place like this, and I have heard of two instances lately, where he had rescued young men from crime and ruin by kind words and timely help. They have told of it,

not himself. He said to me the other night, "I do so want my mother and you to know each other, Miss Ada. She is quite an invalid; but so good with all her sufferings. I hope you will know her some of these days." He has never said anything which has flattered me half so much. I hear that the mother and son almost idolize each other.

Do not forget about Mrs. Richards, and as soon as you, or mamma, can give any definite answer, let me know. Yours truly,

ADA LESTER.

NEW YORK, April 15th.

I AM home-sick and heart-sick, dear Maggie, but I see no prospect of leaving New York for a month, at least. You know uncle promised to take me back to C—— the latter part of April, but last night letters arrived from George, containing the intelligence that his wife and himself would be here about the twenty-fifth. Uncle of course would not like to be away when his son came home, nor to leave soon afterward; and I know that it would be churlish for me to start off alone, and refuse to partake of the happiness caused by his return.

Yet I long, more than ever, to be home. Oh! Maggie, you don't know what a city this is. Never was I deceived in any one as I have been in Mr. Blanchard. I am ashamed of myself, and angry too. But sometimes I almost doubt my senses; for how could any one be so wicked!

A few mornings after my last letter, I was on my way to Mrs. Richards', when, just as I turned into Anthony street, I saw Mr. Blanchard walking hurriedly along on the opposite side of the street. He did not observe me, and I passed on.

"So Mr. Blanchard has been here this morning," said I, when I entered Mrs. Richards' room.

"No, Miss, not to-day," was the reply, as the good woman proceeded with her sewing.

I was somewhat surprised, for the moment, but soon forgot the circumstance. I thought it better that Mrs. Richards should have something to occupy her mind rather than let it dwell on her trouble, so I had obtained work from aunt for her, till I could hear from mamma with regard to her. This called me to her house frequently. Once or twice at different hours I had met Mr. Blanchard, in or near Anthony street, and when I mentioned it to Mrs. Richards, she always denied his having been there.

At first I took no notice of it when I saw him, but one evening when we were speaking of Mrs. Richards, I said, "By the way, you never recognize an acquaintance in the street, do you? I have seen you four or five times in the neighbor-

hood of Anthony street, but you have not deigned to know me."

He started, and as I thought at the time looked a good deal embarrassed, but quickly replied, "I did not see you," and then turned the subject.

I began to feel curious in the matter, and once or twice I cautiously hinted at it to Mrs. Richards. She evidently dropped the subject as soon as possible.

The morning I got mamma's letter, announcing her success with regard to my *protégée*, I hurried to Anthony street earlier than usual. Standing in the entrance of a house nearly opposite to the one to which I was going, were two persons, one was a young woman, who had apparently just opened the door, the other was a form I could not mistake. It was Mr. Blanchard. He did not see me, and passed in, just before I reached Mrs. Richards' door.

"Who lives nearly opposite, in that frame house with a wooden stoop and green railing?" I said, abruptly, as I entered, without even bidding Mrs. Richards, as usual, good morning.

"A person of the name of Barclay, I believe," was the answer of Mrs. Richards, as she picked up her work, then tossed it down again, evidently very much worried, and unconscious of what she was doing.

There was something so strange in her manner, that flashed a sudden light on me. But I was ashamed of myself immediately for my suspicions, though I determined to *know* all I could.

"A young lady," I said, "I have seen her."

"Seen her?" In a voice of dismay.

"What is the history of that person, Mrs. Richards?" I demanded, sternly, my worst suspicions returning at this.

The poor woman looked at me half imploringly as she answered, "Indeed, I do not know her at all, Miss Lester. I have never spoken to her in my life."

The very terror, which was creeping over me, made me calm. "Very well," I replied, "that may all be very true. But what do you know of her history?"

"Nothing but what I have heard from gossiping over at the shop below here."

"Well?"

"She was very ill after she came to live here; a raving maniac for weeks, they said. Some of the neighbor women that went in to see her, said that it was dreadful to hear her moan about her baby that died, and implore them to bring its father to her, because he had promised to marry her."

I grew faint and sick at this revelation, Maggie, of the wickedness of one I had believed so

But I persisted in my questions. I could not believe the story yet. "Well?" said I again, as Mrs. Richards paused.

"I don't know anything more about her. She seldom goes out, but I have seen her sometimes, and she is quite cheerful-looking now. He goes to see her very often, I hear. Once or twice I saw him go in myself. Maby he has married her."

"Who?"

I felt a cold thrill in all my veins. I knew what her answer would be. But I forced myself to speak.

"Mr. Blanchard. I can't believe my own eyes hardly. Such a fine, kind gentleman as he is too. But such things happen every day in this city and nothing's thought of it. He was so kind to me that I couldn't bear to mention it to you, though maby I ought to have done it before."

"Certainly you should have done it before," I answered, hardly knowing what I said, "oh! the villain——"

"But," began Mrs. Richards.

I was too indignant to listen. I waived my hand and rose to go. But suddenly I remembered my errand. Mrs. Richards most gladly and gratefully accepts the proposition. As she has still a good deal of sewing to do for aunt, I think she will not leave for C—— till I do. There is but one thing in all this wide city that she regrets—her graves; the last one more than the rest probably. Ah! no wonder that Horace Blanchard said to me that Anna Richards would "be better off sleeping peacefully in her grave, than to grow up as too many of her sex have to do, to crime and want."

Great preacher! to be sure. And he "hoped too that I never might know of all this sorrow," forsooth. I suppose he *did* hope it!

I do not know how I reached home. Every thing had a strange, unnatural look. I paced my room for hours. I had no tears, dear Maggie, for the death of my Faith. It almost seemed to me to be a great *personal* sorrow, and with me great sorrows are tearless.

In the evening Mr. Blanchard called to accompany us to a music party. To my cousin's astonishment, I declined going with them.

"Are you not well, Miss Ada?" he asked.

His hypocrisy angered me beyond control.

"Not very," was my curt reply, and I went on reading my book. He lingered near the table for a few moments, as if he wished to say something more, but I kept my eyes resolutely on the page, and after a while he left, I never looking up at him again.

Yours truly,

ADA.

Mr. BLANCHARD has called as frequently as usual since the night of the music party, but I have always maintained the same distant aspect toward him, never speaking to him except to answer a question; and then as little as possible. Of course in my uncle's house I cannot go further than this. Nor can I tell uncle the truth. But oh! Maggie, if I was *only* home.

It is getting very embarrassing too. My cousins notice my conduct. I often catch Louise looking at me, after I have answered Mr. Blanchard in monosyllables, with her large eyes dilated in surprise and inquiry. Last night Ella exclaimed, as we three girls were sitting together,

"What's the matter, Ada, with Mr. Blanchard and yourself? If it's a quarrel *do* make it up, for I'm going to be bride's-maid, you know."

"We have not quarreled," said I, "but as I disapprove of Mr. Blanchard's profligacy, I shall not hesitate to show it."

"Profligacy!"

"Yes," I repeated, trying to speak calmly, but I felt the blood rise to my forehead.

"I do not believe a word of it," said Ella, after a pause, with more than her usual energy.

Louise looked up inquiringly. "Has he been gambling?" she asked.

"No," I answered, vehemently, "I should consider even that, bad as it is, a light crime compared to this."

"To *what*?"

I felt all at once that I had gone too far: but there was no way of retreat; and so, with cheeks burning with shame, I told them all I knew of his visits to Anthony street.

A strange light shot into Louise's eyes at this. She triumphed, I suppose, that one whom I had looked upon as a superior, should be brought down to the common level. She replied languidly,

"Really, Ada, you are too Quixotic. Such things are taken as a matter of course now. I have heard something of this story before. She was a sewing girl, brought up by his mother, I believe."

I sprang indignantly to my feet.

"A sewing girl brought up by his mother!" I cried. "And an orphan too most likely! Oh," I continued, forgetting who listened to me, "if there is anything which could make his villainy deeper, it is this."

Louise began to laugh. It was a low, sneering laugh, that makes me shudder to recall, even now.

"Really, Ada," she said, "he ought to see you now. You look like Lucretia when she is

ready to stab the duke. He'd certainly propose at once."

"He!"

I looked at her for an instant, as I spoke, my eyes flashing, for I was never so angry in my life. My cousin flinched, growing pale and averting her look.

"If Horace Blanchard had the throne of the Indies to offer me," I said, "I would spurn him, and you *know* it." And with these words I left the room.

George and Gertrude arrived several days ago.

Gertrude, who would never have been noticed as the daughter of the ruined Mr. Emory, is every where feted as the wife of the rich (and *to be richer*) Mr. Hinton. She is very beautiful, and yet one cannot tell in what her beauty consists, without it may be in the ever varying expression of her countenance. George is very proud of her, and what is better, is very much in love. They will remain with uncle's family till they can find a house and furnish it. My new cousin and myself are already sworn friends.

Strange to say, Mr. Blanchard and George are nearly inseparable. I have been on the point two or three times of telling Gertrude what I know of the former, for I am confident *she* at least will think with me, but I felt as though I *could not* speak of it. Perhaps I can when I know her better. And yet why should I?

After all it may be that Horace Blanchard is less to blame than I thought. There must be something good in a man who can appreciate Gertrude and her husband as he appears to do. He is much more reserved toward me than he used to be. His conduct indeed puzzles me. He still always speaks in the kind manner with which he used to address me, and sometimes I catch him watching me with such a sorrowful expression, that I do not know what to think of it. God show him his error. If he would only marry the poor girl I could forgive him easier. He has not done so, or we should have heard of it.

George drove out yesterday far beyond the city, with Gertrude and myself. The breath of air, so much like home, almost made the tears come. But somehow the apple trees are not so snowy in their bloom, nor the blush on the peach blossom so delicate, nor the perfume of the violets by the stream so sweet as at C—. I believe my senses have been dulled by my long stay in this place; I am certainly wiser; but, dear Maggie, it is a wisdom with which I would most gladly have dispensed. I feel absolutely old, and I fear that I am growing skeptical of all good.

I am not well either. I sleep badly and dream feverishly. My head has learned to ache too—it never did so formerly—I suppose I need the air and love of home to restore me. I am getting nervous also. Often I feel ready to cry at the slightest things. But don't tell mother of this. I shall recover, when I come home.

Yours ever,

ADA.

NEW YORK, May 7th.

I ought to tell you, dear Maggie, of an incident which occurred last night, yet I almost hesitate to do so.

There was to have been a small party of intimate friends at Mr. Vernon's, out of compliment to George and Gertrude, and I, of course, was invited. By the way, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon have both been most to kind to me, and I like them very much.

My toilet was completed sooner than the others, so I decended to the drawing-room, and having nothing to occupy me, went to the piano and commenced playing. I tried to sing and could not. Whenever I have attempted it lately, I have felt my voice choke, and the tears come in spite of me. It seems as if the ivory keys could not send forth a wail sad enough.

Well, in this mood I was sitting, playing I know not what, but thinking of that poor betrayed girl, when Mr. Blanchard came in. I did not know it, however, till his shadow fell across me. I stopped playing and looked up with a start. Then I began to tremble all over. Why I cannot tell, unless that it was because this was the first time we had been alone since I had heard of his conduct.

To my surprise he leaned over me, and said tenderly,

"What is the matter, *dear* Miss Lester? You were playing, just now, the most heart-broken air I ever heard. You seem sadly out of spirits of late."

I made no answer to this. The image of that wronged girl stood between him and me. Rising, I said coldly, that George would be down in a moment, and taking my handkerchief, prepared to leave the room.

But he detained me, laying his hand on my arm.

"Stay," he said, hurriedly, and with an embarrassment I had never seen in him before, "one question, Ada."

You should have heard how touchingly he pronounced my name. For an instant I could not believe that he was really guilty. But I remembered Mrs. Richards' positiveness, and how Louise had confirmed the story.

I looked coldly up. His eye fell. His embarrassment evidently increased. But he managed to go on.

"I know not how," he stammered, "but I fear—that is I feel sure, Miss Lester—that in some way—I have offended you."

He paused, but I made no reply.

"If, in any way, I have done so," he said, "I beg your forgiveness. No one that ever I have met has made me so earnest to have her good opinion. Nay, why should I conceal it? I love you, Ada," and he tried to take my hand, "and this estrangement——"

He could not for a moment go on. Perhaps the haughty manner in which I withdrew my hand deterred him.

"For God's sake," he cried, "what is it? What have I done? Or is it that you have seen my love, and determined to crush it by coldness?"

For a while, I confess it, I had forgotten his guilt in his perceptible agony. But now I was recalled to myself.

"Sir," I said, drawing my figure up, "do you mean to insult me?"

He started back a step. "Insult you?" he cried, incredulously.

If it was not real surprise, never was surprise better acted. He gazed at me reproachfully, and then continued slowly, oh! how mournfully, "Pardon me, I see it is as I feared," and speaking these words, bowed as if for me to pass by.

I was glad enough to escape. It had been a painful interview to me, and at times it was difficult to keep from breaking down. I fled to my chamber.

Maggie, I could have screamed with agony. I knew not till then how much I should have welcomed his love, had he been what I once thought him. When some one knocked at my door, I was conscious, for the first time, that I was lying with my head buried in my pillow, moaning but tearless. It was Gertrude, and I suppose I looked strangely, for she asked if I was ill.

"I am not very well," I replied.

"Why, I thought I heard you at the piano, in the parlor. Mr. Blanchard has been there some time."

I shuddered as though with cold, so nervous was I. Gertrude looked at me inquiringly, then she put her arm around my waist, and said, "Dear Ada."

The tears came to my eyes, I said again I was not well, but begged that she would say nothing about my indisposition, as I should soon recover from it.

I hope I may never have to pass such an evening again. Two or three times I found myself laughing loudly and vacantly, but I was scarce conscious of anything except a horrible, undefined feeling that pressed on my brain and heart. The gay party seemed like a dream that had no belonging to me. Except when it was unavoidable, Mr. Blanchard did not address me, and I was too thoroughly wretched to maintain any show of dignity toward him. I suspect I must have seemed like one walking in her sleep.

Once they asked me to sing—to sing with him. There were many there who had heard our voices together, and all joined in the wish. Gertrude had been playing, and had just left the piano, I seized her arm and gasped out, "*I can't, Gertrude, I can't.*"

I have a vague idea that she looked astonished, but she promptly replied for me in a jesting way,

"I am Ada's physician to-night, and I positively forbid her singing." Then she added more seriously, "*indeed she has been quite sick, and ought not to exert herself.*"

I looked up to find Louise watching me stealthily through her half closed lashes, a faint smile curling her haughty lips.

Mr. Blanchard and Louise sang together after I persisted in refusing. To my fevered imagination her voice seemed to be nothing but gushes of triumph; it was fairly exultant in its power. When she arose from the piano she turned over the leaves of the music book carelessly, then exclaimed,

"Oh, Ada, do sing this—it was George's favorite before he went away. This little thing of Mrs. Norton's '*Love Not.*' You sing it so beautifully."

I know not where Gertrude was, but she was not there to save me then. I was pressed on all sides, and most of all, goaded on by the manner of my cousin, who looked like a beautiful devil as she stood there; and by the inquiring look of Horace Blanchard, who I *felt* was steadily watching me.

I seated myself at the piano, and was astonished at my own calmness. I *know* I never performed so well, I *sung out of myself*, as it were. Song after song was called for, and I went on. I never faltered except as I was turning over the leaves of the music book for what I wanted. With all my exaltation I had a dim consciousness that I was swaying the feelings of all around me. I think I should have sung all night, had they asked me, if I had not been suddenly recalled to myself by Ella saying,

"Why, Ada, I *do* believe that you are bewitched to-night," and then Gertrude came up and almost dragged me from the music-stool.

After that, I thought the evening never would end. As we were leaving the parlor to put on our wraps, I dropped my handkerchief. Mr. Blanchard was near, and sprang to pick it up. I bowed as I took it, and could not resist looking at him. He was intently watching me with a puzzled expression, as if he did not understand me yet; but he did not speak.

All after that seems like a dream. I just remember flying to my chamber when we got home, tearing off my dress and unbinding my hair, for they seemed to oppress me so; then throwing up my window that the chill night air might refresh me. I think I passed the rest of the night pacing my room, and leaning out of

the window alternately. Once I remember snapping the button from the throat of my wrapper as I gave it a pull, for my mental suffering always produces the sense of suffocation with me.

I saw the grey dawn of the morning creeping over the city, and I closed my window and threw myself on the bed. Then came the blessed relief of a dreamless sleep for hours. I awoke completely stupified. I felt as if I *could not* feel any more, or suffer any more.

Under the plea of indisposition, which none seemed to doubt, I have kept my room all day, and this writing to you, dear Maggie, has been all the relief I have had. And it *has* been a relief. Oh! if I was only home. I feel like a sick child longing for its mother.

Yours,

ADA

EXTRACTS FROM MY DIARY.

BY MRS. JONES.

MR. EDITOR—An able writer has said, "*To suffer is woman's lot*," and I should think it my duty to suffer in *silence* if no one's honor were at stake but mine. Mr. Jones has sent you an article headed, "*Where a Sewing Society is Needed*," and as its tendency is to throw ridicule on sewing societies generally, I feel it a duty to overcome my natural timidity, and give you something in reply. With that view I send you some extracts from my journal. They will furnish the best explanation of my conduct, and an irrefragable proof that I have an "extravagant husband."

Very respectfully,

M. M. JONES.

Feb. 10th, 1844.—Yesterday, at the altar, I gave my hand "with my heart in it" to George L. Jones. How bright the world seems! Am I wrong to hope that a life-time of happiness is before me? What felicity like that of two hearts beating in unison, sharing together every joy, lessening sorrow by dividing it? What care I for wealth or honors? It is enough for me to be like the gentle moon, shining in meek and chastened glory, borrowed from him my sun.

March 8th, 1844.—The world says our honeymoon is over, but for once let us prove false the proverb that what "all the world says is true." Our honeymoon shall last as long as life. If we live together the fifty years, which in Germany entitle a married pair to a "golden wedding," we will still be *lovers* with hearts unchilled by the frosts of ages.

July 13th, 1844.—Alas! alas! poor book, faithful chronicler of my thoughts and feelings, I blush that even thou should'st see these tears. Oh! my golden dreams! whither are you fled? These tears, an *unkind* word from George, my idolized George, has caused them.

Feb. 10th, 1845.—This is the first anniversary of our wedding day. To-day too I am twenty-one. How old I have grown in the last year. Oh! George, what has become of your endless protestations of undying love? Now it is the frown, the reproof, at best the careless word which I receive. Yet, though my heart is breaking, I have not spoken, and "concealment," (of this great grief) like the rose in the bud, has preyed upon my cheek till I scarce recognize myself.

July 15th, 1845.—I write beside the cradle of my darling Henry, my first born child. Thank God that this precious babe has come to cheer my loneliness. George too has seemed kinder for the last few weeks. He says he is proud of his son-heir; *heir* to what? Alas! his father's extravagance will leave but little for him to inherit. I have had hard work to make both ends meet of the small sum he allows me for household expenses; now it will be harder still, as my angel boy will occasion an additional expenditure, though I keep no nurse for him.

August 23rd, 1846.—Henry is now running about, and occupies consequently much less of my time. I went the other day to attend the weekly meeting of our Missionary Sewing Society, to which I have belonged ever since I was sixteen. George was dining out, so to give Sarah (the cook) time to attend to Henry, as well as to save a little, we dined off the scraps of yesterday's dinner. When I came home George was fuming away. He said it was a woman's place to be always at home when she was wanted; that it made his head ache to listen to Henry, and that he had wanted Sarah to prepare him a *devilled leg*, but there was neither chicken nor fire in the house. Tears rose to my eyes, but I kept them back, though my heart was too full to speak.

Sept. 1847.—Welcome little *Ada* to thy mother's heart, why must I say it, also to a share in her privations. The other day I asked George for a small sum of money to purchase some articles of clothing absolutely necessary. He replied that he could not see what women did with so much money, before he was married he always had plenty of money, now he says he has not a cent, he says he owes the wine merchant one hundred dollars! and there are twenty-five dollars due on the last lot of regalias he purchased, and twenty-two dollars on that last new coat, and five dollars at the livery stable. He says he has not even a dollar to go to the theatre or to get an oyster supper!

Dec. 15th, 1848.—I have taken in sewing for the last three months to provide clothing for my shivering children, but my eyes are so often red with weeping that I advance but slowly. How true are the words of Saint Paul, that "the married woman careth for the things of the world."

how she may please her husband." George cares no longer for me, why can I not become indifferent to his frowns or reproof? why do I long so wildly for one word of love?

Oct. 1849.—Yesterday, as I was undressing little *Mary*, my blue-eyed babe, George came home *drunk*; he could scarcely stand. I said not a word, but placed a chair by the fire, and made him a cup of hot tea. This morning, however, for the first time for five years, I ventured upon a word of remonstrance. He said I made a mighty fuss about *one glass* too much. He said it was the first time he had ever got drunk, indeed he prided himself upon the number of glasses he could drink without getting intoxicated; and that, though I might not believe it, he could tell the age and price of any wine by tasting it with his eyes blind-folded! To-day father came and asked me to play for him a new song, "Wilt Thou Love me then as Now?" My piano, a wedding gift from father, has scarce been opened since my marriage. I began to play, but before I had finished the first verse I burst into tears. My father kindly asked the cause of my trouble; I could not tell him that my idol was fallen, that the image I had thought

gold had proved but clay. However, he gazed at my faded dress, which showed him that all was not right.

Nov. 10th, 1850.—To-day I have joined a Union Benevolent Association. Yesterday a poor widow with three shivering children came to my door, begging for cast-off clothing. Alas! my poor children are far too thinly clad for the season, but I have no money to purchase suitable materials for making warmer clothing, and I could give the poor woman nothing. I remembered, however, that "time is money," and I thought I could contrive to spare an afternoon in the week to sew for so many far more destitute than myself. If I only had the money Mr. Jones spent on that handsome pipe yesterday to give to the hungry and naked.

MR. EDITOR.—I trust these few extracts will show you how a desire to benefit my suffering fellow creatures has led me to join sewing societies, &c. I will now merely add that if men would make their wives a more liberal allowance for charity, all need of fairs and sewing societies would soon be at end.

M. M. J.

CAUGHT IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.

BY MRS. G. M. RIDDLE.

CHAPTER I.

FRED and Rosa Carson were seated, in the comfortable parlor at Laurel Hill, the residence of their father, a wealthy Southern planter, who resided some twenty miles from Charleston. Rosa had been gazing, very intently, at the glowing fire without speaking, and seemed buried in deep thought, when Mr. Carson entered and handed a letter to her. She broke the seal and devoured its contents with delighted eyes. "That must surely be from some lover," said Fred, "you look so pleased." "Better than that," said Rosa, "its from Nick Stafford." "*Nick who?*" said Mr. Carson, "you had better be careful how you encourage any of those Yankee boys to follow you home." "*Boys!* father, why it's a girl." "Oh, ho," he answered, "well she has a heathenish name." "Her name," spiritedly replied Rosa, "is Helen Cornelia Stafford, but neither of these furnishing a convenient sobriquet, we always called her '*Nick.*' There were six '*Nicks*' in school." "I am afraid they were not *all* among the six," quietly said Mr. Carson. "Oh, father, you are too bad," retorted the gay Rosa. "But tell us about your friend," said Fred. "Well," answered Rosa, "she is the most charming girl in the world; at least *I* think so; we were room-mates and warm friends; she was considered one of the most talented girls in school, she furnished several articles for publication which were greatly admired; and now she has been recommended, by Mrs. Willard, to the directors of the 'Locust Grove Seminary' as a teacher of music; and having a good opportunity of coming on, with some friends, she is to be here next week—which will give us some weeks of her society before school commences."

"A pleasant prospect truly," said Fred, "a literary lady and a Yankee school teacher at that; two things I especially detest, how thankful I am that my business engagements will call me back to the city." "And are they so very urgent?" said Mr. Carson, "for I fear that the character of the Southern chivalry might suffer, if you was to take refuge in actual flight from a lady." "Well," said Fred, "it certainly seems to me a strange, unlady-like proceeding for a

young girl to leave her home and friends, and venture forth among entire strangers for a few *dimes*; it's characteristic of the Yankees." "Indeed, Fred, you do them the greatest injustice," said Rosa, "I found as many generous spirits, as many noble hearts among those that I mingled with there, as I ever I found among strangers in the so-called 'hospitable South;' and never," she added, warmly, "until you have lived among them, will you learn to appreciate their worth." "I am afraid I shall never be able to value them sufficiently then," said Fred. "And," continued Rosa, "whatever the object Helen has in coming to teach among strangers, I feel sure that it can never be for the mere love of gain; she may be compelled to do so from reasons of which we cannot judge." "That is right, my daughter, stand up for your friends," said Mr. Carson, "we shall be happy to see her for your sake, if not for her own." And here the conversation terminated.

The next week Fred received letters, which compelled, as he said, his immediate return to Savannah. Rosa did not urge his remaining; but laughed to herself at the terrible image he had conjured up of her friend. The next morning, very early, Mr. Carson, accompanied by Rosa, started for Charleston. The steamboat had but just arrived, and the passengers were not yet landed, so they drove to the quay at once. Even Mr. Carson was startled from his self-complacency, when, on entering the ladies cabin, Rosa gave a little scream and threw herself into the arms of a perfect Hebe.

"Surely," thought he, "that small head, classic though it be, was never made for any purpose but to carry those sunny curls." Before their arrival home, however, he was forced, by Miss Stafford's shrewd remarks, to mingle respect with his admiration. It was quite dark when they reached "Laurel Hill." A sudden turn brought them in view of a pretty cottage peeping through the rich magnolias, whose glossy leaves shone in the moonlight. "Here we are, little snow-bird," said Mr. Carson, turning to his guest, "and now welcome to my house and home." Mrs. Carson was standing on the porch, surrounded by a score of children, both black and white, from whom she seemed struggling to

free herself. Mr. Carson opened the carriage and first lifted Rosa, and then Helen, into their very midst. "Here is mother, uncles, aunts, and all," said Rosa, pointing to a group of darkies, all of whom made their best bow and courtesy. Mrs. Carson's heart warmed to Helen at the first glance, and Helen soon felt perfectly at home.

"Do tell me," said Mr. Carson, a few days after, "what could have induced you, Helen, to leave your home, and take upon yourself the irksome duties of a teacher? It will cost you more care and perplexity than your little head can well carry; why you seem scarcely more than a child yourself." "Indeed, sir, I am almost eighteen," said Ellen, "and when I put on the dignity of a teacher, I can very well pass for twenty." Mr. Carson shook his head incredulously. "Besides," continued Helen, "father has a large family, so that he can only afford to give us a good education, after which we must make our own way in the world." "But why can you not stay with us and share Rosa's home?" answered the kind-hearted Southerner, "here are plenty of little ones if you must teach; and you shall have the same remuneration which you have been promised in the school." "You are very kind indeed, sir," answered Helen, her eyes filling, "I know not how to thank you; but my services have been promised to the pupils of Locust Grove; and I cannot break my word."

As soon as the arrival of the "new teacher" was noised about, the directors of the "Locust Grove Seminary" were assiduous in their attentions. Many were the *aside* smiles exchanged at the child-like appearance of one, who was so soon to take upon herself "such an important charge." But never was there a doubt expressed as to her capability, after hearing her exquisite performance, and the rich, flute-like tones of her voice. It was always with an exclamation of delight, however, that Helen saw the door close upon her "inquirers," as she termed them.

How swiftly passed the pleasant days to the merry-hearted girls! Such pleasant excursions as they made; "exploring expeditions;" rides on horseback, with all care thrown to the winds. Helen was profuse in her exclamations of delight. "How much better they could enjoy themselves with 'old uncle Joe' as an escort," she said, "how far preferable than to have one's actions criticised by some 'whiskerando,' and to be obliged to maintain at such an extra exertion her dignity as 'preceptress' in the Locust Grove Seminary."

Thus passed the pleasant weeks; one bright gala day to the young friends. Letters would come occasionally from Fred; but so "insurmountable

were his business engagements," "so confining his occupations," that "in all probability he would not be able to visit them in many months." And then Rosa would wickedly tell Helen of the terrible idea he had formed of her as a literary lady. This amused Helen vastly. "Oh, what would I not give," said Rosa, "to see him as far gone as is possible for one poor youth to be; down on his very knees begging for the priceless treasure of your heart and hand: you to refuse him of course at first; but after long and protracted suing, to extend to him the tips of your fingers and bid him rise." And Helen would reply jestingly, "Ah! Rosa, you must be an adept at flirtation; I am afraid you would kill the poor youth entirely, if he was not your brother, before he could escape from your fascinations."

CHAPTER II.

ONE morning, Mrs. Carson interrupted their enjoyment, informing them that Mr. Tarver and daughter were in the parlor. "Is it the rich Miss Tarver?" said Rosa. "Law, yes, Missus," chimed in Dinah, who was standing with mouth and ears wide open, "they do say that she's worth a heap of niggers, but she looks mighty no-account for all that; and ain't nigh out as purty as Miss Rosa, nor Miss Helen merry one, though she does think herself such a mighty somebody." "Well, never mind, Dinah," said Mrs. Carson, "stay here and see if you can help the young ladies, I must return to my guests." "It's not so mighty much that my old hands can do for you no way, honey," resumed Dinah, "the Lor a Mighty has done a heap for you both; I ain't telling nothing but the nateral truth when I say you look as purty and pink-like as 'Nater's own blooms,' and as alike as two peas." But in what the resemblance consisted, it would have been difficult for any one but Dinah to have determined.

When the young ladies had made themselves as irresistible as possible they entered the parlor, and were introduced to the strangers. Miss Clementina Tarver was a sallow, listless creature, and looked so languid, that Helen inquired if she was not well? Her father answered for her, "Clem," he said, "couldn't stand much; and after her long ride I reckon she feels right smartly fatigued." Faithfully did Helen do her part to entertain the visitors. Song after song was called for by the delighted Mr. Tarver, from "Old Susannah," which was his particular favorite, and was obliged to be repeated six times, to "Old Hundred," which he declared to

be "the best piece of sacred music ever published." He told "Clem" that if she couldn't learn under such a teacher as that she was "no earthly account." At last Mrs. Carson, thinking Helen must be tired, suggested that perhaps Miss Tarver would like to see some beautiful and rare roses that had opened that morning. Miss Clementina, to the great surprise of the girls, acquiesced, and after protecting her complexion under a long "poke sun-bonnet" and a thick green veil, she slowly ventured forth. They strolled among the flowers, Rosa gathering some of the choicest to present to Miss Tarver, which she had the pleasure of seeing pulled to pieces in just five minutes after. Finally they seated themselves in the arbor.

Soon after, Miss Tarver produced from her pocket a little black box and a long stick, chewed at both ends, which she broke in three pieces, handing one to Helen, who took it mechanically, and one to Rosa, who declined, saying that she did not "dip." Helen wondered what that could be, and what was expected of her? She was soon enlightened. Miss Tarver opened the box, and proceeded to envelope the brush-end of the stick in the yellow powder which it contained, which she speedily conveyed to her mouth; then gave the box to Helen to follow suit. Helen, not knowing of what its contents consisted, turned aside and applied the box to her nose, when the most violent fit of sneezing ensued, which nearly threw Rosa into convulsions of laughter, and actually extorted a smile from Miss Clementina. "Now, Rosa, do tell me if that is snuff she is eating?" said Helen, in a whisper, with her nose slightly elevated, "you never told me of that peculiarity." "Do you suppose," answered Rosa, merrily, "I intend to lay bare all our faults to your keen scrutiny, little Yankee?" "Law me," said Miss Clementina, "is this the first time you ever saw any one 'dip'? Why it seems like I couldn't live without it; it's a 'heap' of comfort to a body." And she did seem to realize the utmost satisfaction from the operation, though, as Helen soon found, she did not actually eat the snuff, but used it rather as a dentrifice.

After dinner, Miss Clementina indulged in a long *siesta*, which relieved the day of much of its tediousness; and by the time she had sufficiently rested herself, Mr. Tarver declared it time they were going. "Oh! Rosa," said Helen, after the guests had taken their departure, "if all my scholars should be like her." "You may consider yourself highly favored," answered Rosa, "if they should so prove; for she certainly plays very well, and has made a good beginning." "Yes, but I fear I never could rouse in her any

thing like enthusiasm, she has such a die-away style. But how elegantly she was dressed," said Helen, bursting into a laugh, "a corn colored satin, with a blue tarlatan over-skirt for a ride in the country!" "Yes, you will see plenty of gay dressing here," replied Rosa, "and much of it entirely out of place; some of our country ladies have very little opportunity of displaying their finery; and you will often see in church costumes better adapted to an evening party or theatre: but it matters little so that the heart is right; and you have already acknowledged that you have found generous hearts and open hands in your Southern home." "Indeed, dear Rosa," quickly replied Helen, "my lot has truly fallen in pleasant places, and if I was only sure that I should succeed in my undertaking, and my dear father could be made glad by my success, I should feel no further care." "No fear," said Rosa, "father says that the directors think you a prodigy; and that Mr. Isby, who is their oracle, expressed himself in the most lofty praise. Father told me too, this morning, that Eva and Alice are to be your pupils; and you are to come home with them every Friday evening: and we surely can manage to cheat the weeks of their length."

The following Monday, Mr. Carson, accompanied by Helen and his daughters, drove to "Locust Grove Seminary." Helen felt some slight trepidation when ushered into the presence of Professor Willis, who stood there in unmoved gravity, surrounded by a bevy of school girls of all sizes, eyeing her with the most intense curiosity; but she passed bravely through the ordeal; and when Mr. Carson, on departing, proposed to leave Rosa, for the first week at least, Helen would not consent, saying, "that she thought it better for her that she should meet the most trying week alone." She soon became initiated into her duties, and though she oft-times found them irksome, the weeks passed with great rapidity. She found that if she could not always command by her dignity, she could win obedience through love. Most of her scholars too made rapid advancement. But there were a few exceptions; and among these was Miss Clementina Tarver, whose habits of indolence clung to her tenaciously. The helmsman even wrote, at last, to her father for permission to be excused from all her studies but music, as her eyes were becoming weakened by intense application. He did not refuse her, and so the fair Clementina found rest from her labors, and protection to her weakened orbs by assuming green glasses.

Days, weeks, and months rolled on. The

summer vacation was just at hand; and great were the preparations for the yearly examination and concert, which was to be given by the teachers and pupils of the music department. These had increased so rapidly, that an assistant in the person of Mr. Voorhs, a young German, had been procured. This made it much more pleasant for Helen, who was very willing to share the responsibility with an older and more experienced personage.

Rosa was anxious that her brother should be present on this important occasion. "I should not expect him so much," she said to Helen, "was it not that Will Forney is to be here, and Fred will surely come with him." "And who is Will Forney, pray?" asked Helen, with a smile. "A cousin of Mary Forney's, and a very intimate friend of Fred's," said Rosa, stooping to tie her slipper, which called quite a glow to her face. Helen said no more; but quietly made up her mind, that, sooner or later, she was to lose her friend: and she sighed.

The first day of August 18—, saw the pupils of the "Locust Grove Seminary" undergoing the terrors of a strict examination. The spectators were loud in their expressions of delight. Music was introduced frequently during the day as an interlude. Whenever "the little Isbys" performed, their parents would exchange looks of profound satisfaction and complacency. Rosa was watching among the crowd who entered for her brother, and perhaps one other; but in vain; they did not make their appearance. "If they should not come in time for the concert how sorry I should be," said Rosa to her friend. Helen, however, was occupied with other thoughts, and she certainly was not anxious to see one who held her in such profound contempt as Fred.

CHAPTER III.

Two young men drove to Mr. Carson's gate the evening of the concert. And "howdy, (how do) Marse Fred," and "Marse William," were shouted forth from all the servants on the place. "howdy, aunt Dinah, howdy, aunt Patty," said Fred, shaking hands all round. "But where are the folks, Dinah?" he added. "Every living soul about the place has gone to the concert," was the reply. "I fear we shall be too late, Will," said Fred, turning to his companion. "That you will, master, as sure as you're born; but bless my heart alive, you nint gwine off with nothing to eat," shouted Dinah, as they drove away. "Bless his handsome soul, he shall have something good *sure* when he's come back." Fred and his companion found the concert-room

crowded to excess, every door and window full. It was with the greatest difficulty that they could find an entrance through the dense mass, but at last they succeeded in finding a tolerably comfortable place to stand; and where they had a very favorable view of the fair faces shining with so much lustre beneath the brightly glowing lamps. Fred had scarcely more than glanced at them, when he whispered to his friend, "There is the Yankee teacher—I should know her among a thousand." "Where?" said Will. "Why that tall, sallow-looking girl, with the green spectacles. Don't those bespeak the literary lady? Don't that complexion tell of midnight oil consumed? Can you not imagine the terrible things she would say? Why she's *bluer* than indigo." "Hush," said Will, "and listen to my favorite opera of Norma." "And who *can* be that little divinity that is performing it in such an exquisite style?" said Fred. "I don't know," replied Will, "she is a stranger to me, but I think it must be Miss Tarver; cousin May wrote to me that an heiress of that name in school was quite a musician." "It's a great pity that she is so terribly rich," answered Fred, "I am afraid we shall not stand a fair chance, Will." "I for one shall not be a candidate for her favor," answered the latter, "for there are others here equally charming," and Will, as he spoke, looked at the dark-eyed Rosa. Meantime, Fred had eyes and ears for no other than the musician. How did he watch every glance of those bright eyes. With what eagerness he listened to catch the bird-like warbling of her voice. He could have collared poor Mr. Voorhs, whenever the latter mingled his voice with her's in chorus.

When the exercises were over, Fred and Will drew near the stage. Rosa, discerning them, came running down with extended hand. Rosa soon proposed to go for her friend to introduce to them. "Not to-night," Fred said, shrugging his shoulders. "But, Rosa," he added, "you must do me a favor, I am only to stay a few days, and I want you to invite Miss Tarver home with you." "Miss Tarver!" echoed Rosa. "Hush, not so loud," he said. "I mean that young lady in white with the blue *monkey* jacket." "How absurd you are," cried Rosa, "why those are polkas; and nearly all the girls have them on." But, as she spoke, a bright idea had flashed through Rosa's head, and was maturing. Fred, she saw, had evidently mistaken Helen for Miss Tarver; he was anxious for Miss Tarver's company; he should be gratified. So she forebore her original intention of asking Helen to go home with them, and substituted the heiress.

Miss Clementina accepted the invitation with much complacency. It was arranged that she was to go in the buggy with Fred as the carriage was full, and Will was to return home with his cousin May. When the heiress was introduced to Fred she was disguised in the "poke sun-bonnet," and he did not see his mistake, but supposed he had for a companion the Hebe who had so charmed him during the evening. He soon essayed to draw her into conversation; but to his surprise was forced to the conviction that it took a vast deal of talk to spread over a distance of twelve miles. In spite of his efforts, the conversation decidedly flagged; and finally intervals of alarming silence prevailed. "She is a little simpleton, if she is pretty," thought Fred, "I wish I had made some arrangement for her to have gone in the carriage; I dare say, however, that she is much fatigued." Then he made a new attempt. "The exertions of the evening must have been very wearisome, Miss Tarver." No answer. "Do you not often tire of such close confinement?" No answer. "Are you not well? we are most home." Just then her head came down with an unmistakable nod. "Zounds!" he cried, with a low whistle, "if she isn't a sleep! Well, this is a good one."

To Fred's inexpressible relief, they arrived home at last. The sleeping Clementina, meantime, had been awakened, by a sudden jolt, got up by Fred expressly for the occasion. "Let me assist you, Miss Tarver," said Fred, as they drew up before the door. As he spoke, he lifted her carefully to the ground, a feat which impressed him with the idea that her specific gravity was much greater than he had at first supposed. While Rosa came out and escorted her guest into the house, Fred made the rounds to see the various members of the family whom he had not met. Dinah had quite a little feast prepared, which he told her he would come and discuss as soon as he had seen his father. She held him by the button, to tell him "just the least bit about Miss Helen, who was the dearest, blessedest young creeter as ever he sot eyes on; worth her weight in rael shining gold; though they do say," continued Dinah, "she ain't worth nery nigger—but she don't look like poor white folks, for all that." "Well, Dinah, I will hear about her some other time," said Fred, impatiently, and broke away.

He entered the parlor. There, in one corner, was seated the veritable lady of whom he had such a horror, "*the Yankee teacher*" in green glasses. He was introduced to "*Mr. Tarver*," but not to the young lady; though he bowed as politeness required. "Clem tells me you had

rather a cool ride," said Mr. Tarver, looking toward the young lady opposite, "we had a 'right smart sprinkling' of rain this evening, which has cooled the air somewhat." "Y-e-s," answered Fred, who was bewildered into monosyllables, and who thought, "I have been a 'right smart simpleton,' at least."

He soon made some excuse for leaving, and Rosa followed him. "Now do tell me, Rosa," he cried, "if *that* is the young lady who accompanied me home to-night?" "To be sure. Are you crazy? Did you not tell me to invite Miss Tarver?" "Yes, but you might have known that *she* was not the one," he answered, testily, "it was a sweet little girl, about sixteen, with curls." "Yes, but there were several with curls," roguishly replied Rosa, "and several more in blue and white; and as your description was not by any means clear, how was I to know? Besides Miss Tarver is reputed the wealthiest girl in school, and though not in the least talented"—("By no means," said Fred)—"yet she is much sought after, and Mr. Tarver, being an old acquaintance of father's, why it behooves you to pay her due attention." "The deuce!" said Fred, "why this is worse than the school teacher who I took to be this identical lady." Rosa laughed, but said nothing. And now Dinah entered. "Marse Fred, I'm mighty feared," she said, "the chickens will be 'done spoiled' if you don't come." And, yielding to the petted old servant, Fred went off to her feast, carrying Rosa with him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning Mr. Tarver left for Charleston. He had business there that would detain him about two weeks; at the expiration of which time he was to call for his daughter. "A delightful prospect," thought Fred, who had taken an actual dislike to the poor girl. Very soon Will Forney called, to pay his respects and invite them to join a party on horseback to visit Harold Cave, a distance of about ten miles. "I'll tell you," said Fred, "how we will manage it, I'll take Miss Tarver and Rosa in the carriage, and you and your cousin May can join us." "Not by any means; cousin May is already provided with an escort," said Will, "your sister Rosa has promised me her company, and I see no other alternative than for you to take the heiress." Fred's look of perplexity was so irresistibly droll that Rosa was delighted. She thought how finely she was paying him for his neglect of her friend. "I will go at once and see if Clementina will accept your escort," said she, resolved not to

let Fred escape. The young ladies soon appeared, ready equipped, Rosa in her Jenny Lind riding-habit looking truly bewitching. They had scarcely time to mount, when the cavalcade arrived, and in it Fred beheld, seated on a charming little pony, and killingly fascinating in that pretty blue cap and feather, the identical little beauty who had so charmed him the evening previous. Rosa very quietly introduced her friend to her brother, "Miss Helen Stafford." Fred bowed nearly to the saddle, his face showing a comical expression of incredulity and amazement: while Helen was provokingly indifferent and unconcerned.

Such a dull ride as that was to Fred! He poor fellow was fairly caught. Nor could he forbear tormenting himself discussing the probability of Mr. Elliott, who was Helen's escort, being engaged to Miss Willis. "Why isn't Miss Willis of the party?" he said to himself, "it's a false rumor, I'll swear, and Elliott is going to marry Rosa's friend. What a fool I have been!"

From these unprofitable and vexatious reveries he was relieved by arriving at the cave. But here arose a new difficulty. Miss Tarver was "powerfully afraid of snakes," and declared that nothing would induce her to enter "that dark place." They all added their persuasions to Fred's and Rosa's, declaring that there was not a particle of danger: but all to no purpose—go she would not, and resolutely seated herself at the foot of a tree. Fred had no alternative but to remain beside her; and as he heard the merry voices of the gay party ringing through the cave, the clear tones of one distinguishable above the rest; he imagined *that one* leaning on that "flirt of an Elliott's" arm, and was tempted to throw himself or Miss Tarver into the stream at their feet. But determining in some way to make use of the brook, he produced from his pocket a fishing-line; and while he fished Miss Clementina "dipped."

He soon caught some fine trout, of which uncle Joe, who had followed with a basket of provisions, took charge, to prepare for their dinner. By the time the party returned, Fred and uncle Joe had spread the refreshments on a nice cool rock; and great was the amazement at the tempting repast; Will Forney declaring that the fair Clementina had made herself "useful as well as ornamental." But at this uncle Joe rolled up the whites of his eyes to such an alarming extent, that one might reasonably have wondered whether they would ever return to their natural orbits.

And now the merry jest went round. To Fred the hours passed gaily; for though Miss Tarver

still occupied a place at his side, Helen was on the other: and whenever he could engage the latter's attention, he was sure to avail himself of the opportunity. Every moment he grew more in love than ever. At first her beauty it was that had charmed him, but now it was her conversation. Mentally he compared her brilliant powers, in this respect, with the total absence of them in Miss Tarver. At last it was time to think of returning. Fred had been trying to devise ways and means of effecting an exchange with Mr. Elliott, but had not succeeded; and it was with quite an audible groan that he consigned himself to another dull *tele-a-tete* with the heiress.

"And now, Rosa," he said, that evening, "is it possible that this friend of your's—this sunny creature, was ever guilty of writing for the amusement, or benefit, of the public?" "Not for that altogether, certainly; she has written for the same purpose that induces her to come among strangers to teach; to relieve and assist her father, who has been unfortunate, and has a large and expensive family. She is, as you say, all sunshine; and yet she has her moments of depression." "But why did you not invite her home?" said Fred, after a pause, "it would have helped to relieve the tediousness of Miss Tarver's stay." "I never think of inviting her; this is her home; she comes and goes when she chooses. I believe father thinks as much of her as of me; and always calls her his snow-bird." "A most appropriate name; but by the way," said Fred, with affected carelessness, "when is Tom Elliott's marriage with Miss Willis to come off?" "I am not certain that they will ever marry," said Rosa, wickedly, "he has been very attentive to Helen of late." "Well," answered Fred, "there is one thing about which I am going to give you all good warning; *you* and *Will Forney*, and every body else, it is, that if any more rides are projected, I shall be seized with some alarming indisposition, which will preclude the most remote possibility of my being able to join you—at least as the escort of that sleepy Miss Tarver; for no one can imagine," he added, "what I have undergone in the last two or three days."

CHAPTER V.

THE next morning, Fred proposed that they should take the carriage and pay Miss May Forney a visit. "That is right," said Mrs. Carson, "Mrs. Forney was complaining of your neglect the last time you were at home." "Fred knows where to find Helen," thought Rosa. Miss Tarver accompanied them. They found the Forneys

all in great glee. "They must stay," said the latter, "and assist in arranging some 'tableaux' for the evening; they were just about to send Will over." Rosa and Fred were delighted with the idea, and entered into it very heartily. After dinner Will took Fred aside, and told him that as Miss Tarver was a stranger, they must give her some part; and that Miss Helen and Rosa had selected a scene from *Othello*, which they had before seen depicted in tableau. "And now, Fred," he continued, "you are the only tolerable '*Othello*' in the company, being tall and dark." Fred absolutely refused at first; but finally became more reconciled, though declaring "that Shakspeare would have hung himself at once if he could have seen the future *Desdemona*." Invitations were sent out for miles around; and by evening there was quite an assembly gathered. The first tableau was that of Fred and Miss Tarver. There lay the sleeping *Desdemona*, unconscious of any wrong, her cruel lord with his lowering visage standing over her with the huge pillow, ready to annihilate her in his wrath: and such determination was in his action, such fierceness of purpose in his eye, that Will Forney interrupted the silence, whispering to Rosa, "that he believed Fred was going to smother her sure enough." Fred heard him, dropped the pillow, the curtain fell, and the tragic scene was closed. Many others followed. Rosa was beautiful in her Persian costume as "*Hiadee*," her long, shadowy tresses, braided with pearls, hanging nearly to her feet, whose tiny slipper peeped so prettily from beneath the full white trouser: and Will Forney, as "*Hafed*" at her side, looked as if he was entirely satisfied. The last tableau was "*The Soldier's Return*." Fred, in full military uniform, personified the victorious soldier, who, in the flush of victory, came to lay his trophies at Helen's feet; while Helen, dressed in the piquant costume of a peasant girl, a crimson bodice, short skirt, and jaunty little cap, looked the most bewitching creature imaginable. Loud were the murmurs of admiration. Fred was beside himself with love and jealousy. To his eyes Helen seemed a thousand times lovelier than ever before. Should he allow such a fair prize to be borne off in triumph by Elliott? No, he would at least make an effort to prevent it: there, before it was too late, he would declare his passion. Accordingly, as Helen turned to go, the impetuous lover seized her hand. "Stay, Miss Helen, dear Helen," he cried, "why cannot this be real?" She looked at him for a moment in astonishment, then proudly raising herself, coldly withdrew her hand. "Sir," she said, "I am in no humor for jesting." "Jesting!" he

exclaimed, "you surely do not deem me guilty of trifling on such a subject?" "If not, your language is uncalled for and insulting," answered Helen, with spirit. "You, Mr. Carson, the son of a wealthy Southerner—you who have despised me for my vocation, my attainments, my birth, and everything else that I deem valuable—you, on the second evening of our acquaintance only, pretending a lasting attachment to a poor Yankee school teacher, it is too much!"—and bursting into tears, she rushed from the room.

At the door, she encountered Rosa, and drawing her into the opposite apartment, with many bitter tears poured forth the story of her wrongs. Rosa tried by every possible means to soothe her; but a spirit of pride and bitterness seemed roused within Helen, as new as it was unexpected to Rosa. "And Rosa too, if I had not been poor and friendless, he would never have thought of trifling with me in this manner; but he thought a poor teacher, dependant on her own exertions for bread, might be insulted with impunity." "Indeed," said Rosa, "you do my brother the greatest injustice; he may have been precipitate and imprudent, but you ought at least to do him the justice to believe him sincere: but it is all my own fault; my light meaning words, which I laughingly confided to you in our gay moods, have rankled deeper than I ever dreamed."

Here they were interrupted by a servant, who came to inform Miss Rosa that her brother was waiting. Rosa, going out, found him pacing the piazza in the greatest excitement. "Oh, Rosa, what have I done?" he cried, "you must intercede for me—I was ridiculously precipitate: hurried on by a rash impulse, I have perhaps ruined all—but beg of her to forgive me—say I will trouble her no more, but leave in the morning for Savannah."

Rosa found Helen more composed, and assured her again and again that her brother intended no disrespect, and that she must forget all, if not for his sake, at least for her's, who had perhaps been the innocent cause of it. "He is to leave in the morning," said Rosa, "oh, do try to forgive him." "Do not let him go on my account, Rosa," answered Helen, "you know I am to stay with May a few weeks." "Yes, but what shall I tell him? or will you see him?" "No, I cannot do that; but tell him that I will try to harbor no feeling of resentment." "And that you forgive him?" "I—I'll try."

So ended that eventful night. Fred left for Savannah the next morning. And to the relief of Rosa, Mr. Tarver soon after returned unexpectedly, and bore the fair *Clementina* to her own home.

Time passed. Will Forney's interest in Rosa's pursuits seemed never to flag. Helen apparently avoided coming to the Carsons as much as possible, pleading that her engagements with her friend May, to whom she was giving lessons in drawing, prevented. Besides she thought that a third person was entirely *de trop* under existing circumstances. At last Rosa told her one day that if she imagined that she was the least offended by her refusal of her brother, she was much mistaken, for, said the kind creature, "he deserves it all." "You are a dear, good girl, Rosa," said Helen, kissing her, "but I have sometimes imagined that your father and mother were cold." "It must have been a very flimsy fancy which should have led you to think that; for at Fred's particular request it has never been mentioned to them, nor any one else."

When Helen returned to her school after the long vacation, she found her duties far more irksome than formerly. She wondered why she took so little interest in what was passing; she felt far less gay than was her wont in days gone by; and even old Dinah remarked that it "peared like sothing ailed the child, she was mightily afeared she had a misery somewhere, she looked so sorter down-like." Mr. Stafford had written to his daughter long since, returning the fruits of her labors which she had sent him, and giving her the pleasing intelligence that by an unexpected return of some of his investments, he could once more have the satisfaction of again having his children around him, and that he longed to see his darling Helen. In consequence of this, Helen had decided to go home at the end of the present session; for she sometimes thought her *health* was failing under the effects of the enervating climate.

And now Will Forney had returned to the city; but not until Rosa had promised to bestow on him a priceless gift, her own sweet self, in the ensuing spring. They were to take in their tour the cities and attractions of the North, and Helen was to accompany them, at least as far as her own home, for she had not yet given Rosa the required promise to share their travels further.

The weeks flew by; and as the period approached great was the commotion in the domestic portion of Mr. Carson's household. Many a poor fowl was seen strutting its last, little dreaming that their "lot was upon them," and that Dinah was eyeing their fair proportions with a glance that never wavered, declaring that it took a "heap to do so much, and they want gwine to have no poor white folks doings, when

Miss Rosa, bless her purty face, was gwine off like a lamb that she was." Rosa had written to her brother, that of course he would not refuse to come on such a very important occasion; more particularly as Miss Tarver had eloped with Mr. Voorhs, the music teacher; her father vowing that he would cut "Clem off with one cent;" but it was the general opinion that he would forgive them, and if he did not, why Miss Clementina had an independent fortune left her by her grandmother, and as Mr. Voorhs was of a very kind disposition, her fate was not to be so much deplored.

A day or two previous to the wedding, Fred arrived with his friend Will. Rosa and Helen were busy with silks, Brussels, flowers, and a thousand other fancies pertaining to a bride's *trousseau*, and could, therefore, find little time to devote to the gentlemen. Helen met Fred with perfect ease and frankness, after fortifying herself by the most desperate efforts outside the door, preparatory to entering the room where all the family were gathered. On the evening of the same day she stood by the window of the parlor, partly concealed by the drapery, and the only occupant of the dimly-lighted room. Fred came in softly, and stood beside her, mistaking her for his sister. "That is right," he said, "indulge in pleasant dreams, for the world is bright before you—and may the future be as fair as your fancy has depicted it, *dear Rosa*." "You are mistaken, Mr. Carson," said Helen, turning so that he saw her face, and stepped forward to leave the room. "Stay, Miss Stafford, will you never forgive the past? can we not be *friends*—I will not even hope for anything more!" Helen took his extended hand. "And you bury the past irrevocably," he said, eagerly, "do you? And with all my faults you forgive my past offences?" "Freely, Mr. Carson." "And you will not refuse to stand with *me*, as my sister's attendant at the altar?" "Certainly not; how could I refuse Rosa such a request?"

Let us pass over the wedding. We will not even discuss the beauty of the bride; her light form, half shaded by her dark tresses, and the transparent folds of her veil—let us pass all—the tears of the parents, the screams of the children, the sobs of the servants, who said, "Twould 'pear like Miss Rosa was done dead and gon sure enough, poor honey."

Fred had attached himself to the bridal party, Rosa declared, "without an invitation." Perhaps he saw it gleaming from Helen's eyes—he didn't. Be that as it may, he insisted that it was necessary and highly important to the interests of the firm of which he was a member, that

he should visit New York at that particular time; and as a matter of course he would rather prefer going with the party. So the four took passage in a Charleston steamer.

They were detained by storms and high seas nearly a week; and in the hour of trial and danger, Fred Carson made himself so necessary to Helen's safety, and stood by her side so constantly, that ere they had reached home Helen had promised, that, with her father's sanction, he should always maintain his place there.

And was that sanction given? Aye, reader; for a few weeks after, there was a goodly company gathered at Mr. Stafford's mansion in honor of the *two brides*.

"And now Mr. Carson," said Mr. Stafford, during the evening, "since you are one of us, I shall endeavor to remove some of the prejudices,

which, I am told, you Southerners entertain of your Northern brethren." "Indeed," said Mrs. Will Forney, *very* quietly, "I think they have dispersed with great rapidity within the last few months; such a terror as he had of anything north of the Potomac—of literary ladies—of—" "Never mind," said Fred, "I plead guilty; I was caught in spite of myself; and should not be in the least surprised, if a year from now, I should be mounted on a little green wagon peddling *Yankee clocks* and *wooden nutmegs*." They all laughed heartily at the idea; for the happy are ever merry.

The travellers spent several months North, lingering at all the places of interest; but the merry Christmas found them again among the happy circle, gathered around the pleasant fire-side at "Laurel Hill." And there we leave them.

MY EXPERIENCE AS AN AMANUENSIS.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

I WAS yet a school girl in pantaletts, when, some seven or eight years ago, my father's ward, George Shelburne, having joined the United States Navy, was ordered to California. I well remember the consternation which pervaded our household when this terrible order was announced. California!—a region then but just coming into notice, and but little known; its name conveyed to my mother's mind only a vague idea of a vast desert place, inhabited by wild beasts and savages, and about as distant and unreal as some territory in the moon.

To be sent thither seemed to her equivalent to a condemnation to death, or at least eternal banishment.

George Melburne, or cousin George, as we generally called him by courtesy, though no relationship existed between us, had been brought up in our family, and had so endeared himself to my mother, that she often declared she felt no difference in her affection for him and her own children. She now loudly lamented the fate of this beloved son, and even entreated him to throw up his commission, since the service exacted such a terrible sacrifice; but finding her arguments unavailing, she set to work with right good will to prepare her young sailor for his voyage.

Such a mending and making, and brewing and baking as ensued I shall never forget. Nothing was thought about, or talked about, but *poor* George's departure.

We children were sent of errands, or shoved aside, or put to bed to get us out of the way, in a manner which I, being something of a spoiled child, was rather disposed to resent.

At length the very evening before the day when George was to depart arrived. The younger children had been sent to bed early; I was set down to my lessons, and my mother was busy in the room adjoining the one where I sat packing the last trunk. George stood beside her, watching her operations, and listening to her thousand and one admonitions and warnings, and promising in the honest warmth of his heart to obey them every one. I remember it all distinctly.

My mother's task was at last finished—all but adding the last batch of ginger-cakes, just then coming from the oven. While she went to see

after them, George sauntered into the room where I was; and having lighted his cigar paced up and down, enjoying the luxury it afforded him, sunk meanwhile in a deep reverie, and evidently thinking of anything in the world but my humble self.

I was vexed for half a dozen reasons. First, I was always a great favorite with George, and did not like to find myself unnoticed; then I was provoked at the coolness he displayed in the midst of all the commotions he caused: and lastly, I was annoyed to find that I could not, for my life, concentrate my thoughts enough on the composition I was trying to write, to have the least hope of success.

In vain I took up my pen, and resolutely bent my eyes on my paper, and waited for ideas to come; not a thought suggested itself on the subject I had chosen. My mind *would* wander off from the dry *theme* to the matter-of-fact circumstances connected with George's departure—the ginger-cakes going in his trunk, and the adventures he was about to encounter.

Now I was an ambitious little thing, and the thought of going to school on the morrow, with my task unfulfilled, was not to be endured. I uttered sundry ejaculations concerning the "*hardness*" of writing compositions, but finding my remarks unheeded, I at last exclaimed, with saucy pettishness,

"I don't see what use a great man is, walking up and down the room, if he can't help a poor little girl with her composition!"

George turned toward me with an amused smile, and coming and sitting down beside me, said kindly,

"How now, Nell? are you vexed with your old friend? What is the matter? Let me see—'*theme*—on the naval service.'"

I could see that George with difficulty preserved his composure on reading this heading to my future theme, but he was very kind, and helped me nicely out of my difficulty. My composition was soon written and fairly copied out.

Such is the most distinct of my childish recollections of George Shelburne, nor do I remember hearing much about him during many succeeding years.

Seven years had passed away, and the da

which saw me eighteen years old was my last school day. I bounded home full of glee at my new freedom, and throwing open the door of my mother's room, burst within, swinging my bonnet above my head, and uttering a wild hurrah of delight, at the same moment letting my bonnet fly off at a tangent, and flinging the great arm full of books I held from one end of the floor to the other.

This feat performed, I glanced up, and to my consternation perceived that mother was not alone. A very handsome man in naval uniform, with one arm in a sling, was sitting beside her. I saw his look of amazement at my extraordinary entree; I perceived my mother's glance of mortification and dismay: and the whole scene presented itself so ludicrously to my mind, that I burst into a fit of laughter and fled from the room.

A few minutes more sufficed to make me heartily ashamed of my conduct. I was considering what course I had best pursue to appease my mother's displeasure, and excuse my remarkable conduct to the stranger, when a pleasant voice which I recognized, though it had grown more deep and manly, called from the foot of the stairs leading to my room,

"Cousin Nelly, cousin Nelly, where are you? Why don't you come and speak to me?"

Was it indeed George Shelburne returned?

I emerged timidly from my room, and answered shyly,

"Because I am ashamed to, cousin George—what must you think of me?"

"Think of you?" said he, looking up at me—"why that you are still the same charming, untamable little wild bird you were seven years ago—only a thousand times more—well I will not say all I think."

"Because it is so bad?" I asked, coming slowly down the stairs.

He smiled, and nodded, saying, "Of course," but his eyes told me a more flattering story, and I preferred their version of the case.

George and I were soon on a footing of most friendly intimacy. He had learned to be a great flatterer during his roving, and I confess I was well enough pleased with all the nonsense he whispered in my ear. Yet I remembered to have heard somewhere that the naval officers were famous for their gallantry to women in general, and I was not without my misgivings that George did not quite mean all his words and manner implied. I was terrible uneasy on this point.

One day, when he had been at home about a month, he said to me,

"Nelly, do you remember the night I helped you with your 'theme on the naval service?'"

I replied that I did.

"Well then," he rejoined, "one good turn deserves another. I have been unable, as you know, to write or use my arm in any way, since the hurt I got in California—my letters are sadly in arrears; will you not be my amanuensis, this morning?"

I willingly assented, and paper and pens were produced. I seated myself, saying,

"Now begin."

"This letter shall be to my old chum, Bob Nichols, in California," said George. "'Dear Bob,'"

"'Dear Bob,'" I repeated.

"Hem!" said George, "well—'this is to inform you of my arrival in the land of my fathers—'"

"'Land of my fathers,'" said I, writing.

"'No misfortunes occurred during my voyage, but a terrible one has befallen me since my return home.'"

"'Return home.'"

"'The fact is, Bob, that I have fallen over head and ears in love with the most bewitching, tormenting, loveliest little creature that the sun ever shone on.'"

"'Shone on,'" echoed I, examining minutely the point of my pen.

"'The worst of it is,'" continued George, "'that I dare not reveal my affection to its object, for she is such an arrant little flirt, *par instinct*, that she would too cruelly use her advantage—'"

"'Her advantage,'" I repeated, while a conscious smile stole, against my will, across my face.

George, keenly watching my countenance, as I felt, continued to dictate.

"'The lady I love is a tall, majestic blonde, with regular features, and very stately manners.'"

I started, and forgot to transmit that last sentence to paper in my surprise, till I was reminded of my office.

"'Her name I withhold for the present,'" added George.

"I think I would mention her name if I were you," I interrupted, hastily.

"No use," said George, laconically.

"More satisfactory to your friend," I urged.

George smiled. "My friend can bear the suspense," he said.

"If he can, I cannot," cried I, with jealous impetuosity, losing all self-command; "George, whom are you in love with?"

"Do you really want to know?" he asked, still closely studying my face as I was conscious.

His question gave me time to recover the false step into which my feelings had beguiled me, and I answered flippantly,

"To be sure I do. Do you expect to find a girl of eighteen without curiosity? But one thing I know already—*she* will be a foolish woman, whoever she is, who gives *you* her heart."

"Is that your real opinion?" cried George, with sudden, startling earnestness, as he seized my hands and looked steadily in my face.

I nodded my head, and strove to escape, but he held me fast.

"Nelly, Nelly, your tell-tale face belies your words, or rather it tells me that you are *yourself*, that same foolish woman of whom you speak."

He drew me to him as he spoke; and I, taken by surprise as I was, could think of nothing better to say than,

"Let me go, George, you will certainly hurt your wounded arm!"

He paid little heed to my caution, nor to my request that he would go on with his letter. Indeed, to this very day, that letter to his mythical friend Bob Nichols, of California, is still unfinished, though I still occasionally officiate to my husband as amanuensis.

EMILY LAWRENCE.

BY MRS. MADELINE LESLIE.

CHAPTER I.

THE good Rector of St. James Church, in the parish of Bloomingdale, England, sat in his large arm-chair, in his quiet study, leaning his head upon his hand.

The clock upon the mantel-piece struck the hour of ten. At eleven that morning, he was to unite in the holy bonds of matrimony, his eldest daughter, his beloved Emily, to the man of her choice; and among all his acquaintance there was none to whom he would sooner commit her happiness than him whom she had chosen from her numerous admirers as the companion of her life.

Until the arrival of that hour, I will occupy the passing moments in sketching briefly the previous history of the chief characters in this story.

Charles Ellingwood was the young Rector from Cheswell, a flourishing village about fifteen miles distant from Bloomingdale. Nine months previous to the time of which I write, he had received a valuable living from the Earl of Marlboro, the former school fellow, and friend of his father. He was considered a young man of fine talents, which, united to his ardent piety, and his hearty love of the work to which he had devoted himself, gave promise of extended usefulness in his profession.

Soon after he entered upon his duties in Cheswell, he was introduced to Emily Lawrence who was visiting a lady in his parish. A mutual affection sprang up between them, and when Emily returned home she was accompanied by Mr. Ellingwood, whom she had referred to her parents for consent to their union.

This, Emily did not doubt, they would at once grant. She had from childhood been indulged in every reasonable desire, and now when the happiness or misery of her life was in question, she was sure they would regard her wishes.

In her letters to her parents, and her sister Alice, she depicted in glowing language the attractions of her friend. She described his preaching, his beaming countenance, his devotedness to the poor, his ardent attachment to his friends, until she felt that they must admire him as she did.

Emily had no reason to be dissatisfied at his reception. Her father, always kind and cordial

in his manner, was so tender in his care of her, as he gently lifted her from the carriage, and affectionately kissed her cheeks;—so fatherly in the presentation of his hand to her friend, that she felt a just pride in him, as she said with a bright blush—"My father—Mr. Ellingwood." They were then so cordially welcomed by Mrs. Lawrence and Alice, as to increase his reluctance to ask them for their dearest treasure.

This feeling, however, was soon lost in admiration of her, as he watched her going from room to room, greeted at every turn with fresh demonstrations of joy. At an early hour, he requested an interview with Mr. Lawrence, when in a frank and honorable manner he informed him of his love to Emily, and requested his sanction; expressing an earnest hope, that he would give his consent to a speedy union.

Mr. Lawrence looked very grave and said in reply, that he could not but feel a tender interest in one so ardently attached to his darling child; yet he said their acquaintance was too short to give assurance of their suitableness to each other, and to afford a reasonable prospect of mutual happiness.

Mr. Ellingwood smiled, and was about to assure him that he felt no doubt on those points, but with a gentle wave of the hand, in reply to his speaking countenance, Mr. Lawrence continued, "Perhaps her mother and I have not been without blame in our manner of educating our daughter. It has been a subject of much thought with me for a few weeks. She has been the light of our home, the joy of our hearts; and we may have forgotten too much, that she might be called to other scenes, where the sensitiveness, the delicacy of feeling, we have so loved and cherished, would be the source of great unhappiness to her."

Mr. Lawrence looked seriously and earnestly at his companion as he said this. His eyes filled with tears as he met the answering look of the young man. He could have taken him to his arms; but he restrained himself and proceeded. "Emily possesses a warm heart, she has always lived in an atmosphere of love. The want of it would soon kill her. She is a creature of impulse; too much so, I have feared for her own good. Yet when I have seen that these impulses were constantly leading her to high and holy acts, I

could not restrain her. She has a keen sense of honor, and an indignant contempt of those who are destitute of it. I never knew Emily guilty of meanness. Now, are you willing to bear with her gently and tenderly? In the relation into which you wish her to enter, she would feel keenly any neglect, any apparent diminution of the first ardor of affection. Though not at all suspicious, yet she would be alive to the first manifestation of coolness. She has, I see, given you her whole heart, and will want a whole heart in return."

"Nay, bear with me," continued he, as the young man again attempted to reply, "I do not wish to extol my Emily. She has faults; but they seem to arise from the excess of goodness. Few, very few, could understand or appreciate such a character. I feel that she is not fitted for contact with the world. Now, when it is perhaps too late, I regret that we have not led her to govern herself more by judgment and less by impulse."

"Oh, no!" interrupted Mr. Ellingwood, "it is that very sensitiveness that I love, manifested by the bright flush of her beaming countenance. It was that which first interested me. I watched her while an account was given of the sufferings of a poor family in my parish; and though she spoke not a word, yet I could see how she sympathized in those sufferings;—how highly she admired the generous spirit who relieved them, and condemned the insensibility of those who expressed no sympathy with suffering humanity. I would not have her changed. Oh! no. If you will trust your treasure with me, it shall be the aim of my life to make her happy."

Mr. Lawrence arose, took Mr. Ellingwood's hand, and said tenderly, "I have written to several gentlemen in whose judgment I can confide, in regard to your character; and it gives me pleasure to be able to say, that I have received such replies to them as induces me, and also Mrs. Lawrence, to give our consent to your betrothal to my daughter, upon one condition, that your marriage do not take place until the expiration of at least six months."

It is sufficient to say, that, although many motives were urged in favor of an immediate union, yet, upon this point, Mr. Lawrence was very firm, as their acquaintance had been so brief.

In the meantime, Mr. Ellingwood was to repair Rosedale, the name of his parsonage, and fit it for the reception of his bride.

CHAPTER II.

MR. LAWRENCE, having requested to be interrupted for one hour previous to the marriage

ceremony, sat quietly in his study, absorbed in meditation and prayer.

Trying and solemn was the scene before him, though not unmixed with joy.

Emily had often been said to resemble her father in mind and character, while Alice resembled her mother. He had never realized how dear she was to him, until now he was to consign her to another. He might see her often; but other duties would press upon her; and months would often elapse without his being blessed with the presence of his beloved child.

Then he turned to the other side of the picture, and thought how happy she would be with one, whose thoughts and feelings were so congenial to her own.

He knelt, and prayed earnestly for her and her companion, for himself and those left behind, and had just arisen from his knees, when the subject of his thoughts came gliding into his room, arrayed into her bridal robes, and throwing herself upon her knees before him, said in a tone full of earnest affection, "My father, bless your child."

For a moment he sat with her hands clasped in his, and his lips touching her forehead; then laying one hand upon her head, said, though his voice quivered with emotion, "God, even your father's God, bless thee, my daughter, and cause His face to shine upon thee, and give thee peace." The low response was uttered—and Emily was gone.

Then came the summons for him. They proceeded to the village church. The prayers were read; then the solemn words which united them for life; the blessing was pronounced—and the company separated.

The young and beautiful bride—for there were many that day, who thought they had never seen a fairer—hurried away. Her heart was overflowing with emotion; her eyes were filled with tears; and she dared not stop to bid those she loved farewell.

Months and years rolled on, and Emily was increasingly happy. Her attachment to her husband grew stronger and stronger. Her capacity for happiness seemed ever increasing. Two lovely daughters were growing up beneath their vine-clad roof, and Emily was often fearful lest in her heart she should make idols of these dear objects of her affection. She prayed earnestly that her Heavenly Father would enable her ever to remember, that all her blessings came from Him.

Mr. Ellingwood, by this time, realized how "far the wife is dearer than the bride," and blessed God for the day when he first saw and loved Emily Lawrence.

But it is not the lot of mortals to enjoy unalloyed happiness. It was now fourteen years, since this beloved wife had left her home to become the mistress of Rosedale, when she was hastily called to her father's bedside. Mr. Lawrence had been failing for a number of months, and his dutiful child had spent a great part of the time with him. Her sister Alice was married and settled at a distance; and as her mother was very feeble, the care of her father devolved chiefly upon her.

Only one week previous to this time, Mr. Ellingwood had prevailed upon her to return home, as he found her pale and exhausted by care and nursing, promising she should return when she was recruited.

As there was thought to be no immediate danger in the case of her father, Emily consented.

Now he was dying, and she hastened to receive his parting blessing, ere his lips were cold in death.

When she arrived the damp of death was already on his brow. His friends stood weeping around him, supposing him speechless, when Emily in an agony of grief threw herself upon the bed, and in a voice which thrilled every heart, cried, "My father, oh! my father—bless once more your child, your own Emily."

That cry of woe, wrung from his daughter's heart, seemed to stay the departing spirit. His lips moved faintly, and putting her ear to his lips, she heard him say, "May God—bless—my—darling—Emily!"

A heavenly smile played around his mouth, and the soul freed from its tenement of clay, was carried by waiting angels to the bosom of his God.

His afflicted daughter continued on her knees beside him. No tears dimmed her eyes. She looked fixedly into the face of her father, while his right hand was clasped in hers.

So earnest was her gaze, so unnatural her expression, that her husband became alarmed, and tried gently to raise her and lead her from the room.

She submitted passively; but turning to take one last lingering look at that loved face, she fell insensibly into the arms of her husband.

The village bells tolled the requiem of the departed. The church was dressed in mourning. The parishioners assembled to pay their last tribute of respect and affection to the memory of their beloved Pastor. Earth was committed to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; yet Emily remained insensible to her loss.

She heard now and then open her eyes, smile languidly upon her husband and daughters, who

were ever by her side, and then fall back into insensibility. The shock had been more than she could endure, and her whole system sank under it.

Very gradually she recovered her strength, but remembered nothing of what had occurred.

Mr. Ellingwood knew the death of her father could not long be concealed from her; and in answer to one of her frequent inquiries for him, gently told her he had gone to his rest.

There was a sudden start, succeeded by a flood of tears.

Her husband and children wept with her; they knew tears would bring relief to her burdened heart.

Soon after this, she was able to be carried to Rosedale; her mother returned with Alice to reside with her for a season, in the hope of being benefited by a change of air; and the old parsonage, the home of her youth, was closed for the first time during her life.

Mr. Ellingwood began now to realize the truth of what Mr. Lawrence had told him in regard to Emily. She was entirely changed. She seemed to cherish her grief; and when her husband gently chid her and reminded her of her numberless blessings she still enjoyed, she would only embrace them as if she feared to lose all her treasures, and weep in silence.

This state of mind so preyed upon her, that her friends became seriously alarmed, and the physician earnestly advised an entire change of scene.

Mr. Ellingwood had an uncle in Havana who had often invited him, if he should ever be in search of health, to visit him and enjoy the salubrious air, the delightful fruits, and the warm welcome they would receive.

He now determined to accept their invitation. Alice and Mary were placed at school. His parish was left in charge of the curate, and Mr. Ellingwood sailed with his wife for the port of Havana.

During the winter Emily rapidly gained health and spirits; and in the spring was so nearly recovered, as to encourage great hope of her permanent and entire restoration.

Mr. and Mrs. Lenox parted from their nephew and niece with great reluctance; only comforted by the partial promise that Emily should return to them the next winter.

During the summer, Mrs. Ellingwood, surrounded by the beloved members of her own family, together with her mother and sister Alice, seemed entirely happy.

Her health, still delicate, called forth the tenderest care from all her friends; and she seemed once more the sun of the home circle, enlightening and enlivening all around her by the rays of love

from her own heart. No ominous bird augured the dark future before her. No clouds, portentous of evil, yet darkened her horizon. To her vision all was bright.

During the autumn, however, she felt some return of her pulmonary complaints; and her promise to return to her friends in Havanna, if such were the case, recurred to her mind. She felt great reluctance to leave home. Whenever her husband adverted to the subject, her manner plainly showed it to be an unwelcome theme; and yet she could not account to herself for this repugnance. She had passed a delightful winter in Havanna, formed many pleasant acquaintances, and received great benefit to her health.

She determined not to yield to foolish sentiments, but to prepare for the voyage. She resolved to take her daughter Alice as a companion, and availing herself of the return of a friend to Cuba, to travel under his protection.

It was not without a struggle that Mr. Ellingwood was induced to consent to this arrangement; but Emily reminded him of what he felt to be too true, that his parish would suffer from his continued absence; and he knew his friends in Cuba would do everything in their power for the comfort and happiness of his wife. He confidently hoped that she would return entirely well, so that no future separation would be necessary. He therefore accompanied Emily and Alice to Liverpool, and having provided every thing needful for the voyage, left them in the care of Mr. Clarke, and returned to his lonely habitation. During the month that followed before he could expect any tidings from the travelers, he constantly reproached himself for entrusting them to the care of another, and made firm resolves never again to consent to such an arrangement.

But when he received cheering letters from the absent ones, giving an amusing account of their "trip," as Emily called it, and the joyful welcome they had received, he seemed to imbibe some of the hopeful spirit expressed in his wife's letter, and to look forward, as she did, to her early return. He now turned with new ardor to the care of his flock and the education of his daughter Mary, who remained at home, and who laughingly told her father that Susan, the house-keeper, had taken her into partnership.

Never was there a little Miss of twelve, who felt more matronly than she did on the first morning after her father's return from Liverpool. She sat on a high chair at the head of the table, and endeavored to imitate her mamma; while Susan stood at the back part of the room, the very picture of merriment.

But her father did not laugh at her. He tried to look as grave and dignified as she did; and complimented her highly by telling her she appeared very much like her mother.

CHAPTER III.

EVERY one acquainted with history must remember the insurrection in Cuba, in 1830. It was not long after her arrival before Emily saw symptoms of an approaching revolution, and found that in all his sympathies, her uncle was with the Islanders in trying to gain their independence of the government of Spain.

Her aunt told her that he had always maintained his popularity, and owed much success to his having remained entirely neutral; but that within a few months some cases of oppression, which had come under his immediate notice, had wrought an entire change in him; and that now he had determined to use all his influence in their behalf.

In consequence of this the Junto held its secret sessions at her uncle's house, where the contemplated revolt, and the best means of ensuring success, were the themes of discussion.

It was not at all strange that Mrs. Ellingwood with her impulsive nature, her strong sympathy for suffering, and her detestation for oppression, should enter with her whole heart into the cause of freedom. She dreamed not of the danger to which she was thus exposing herself and her lovely daughter.

Little did she imagine that her name was enrolled with that of her uncle and aunt, by Spanish officers, upon the list of conspirators; that her presence at the nocturnal meetings of this club was at the price of her life.

She wrote a journal of daily events, giving at length all the plans of the insurgents, and sent it to her husband, entreating him not to be anxious on their account, as her uncle had taken every means to ensure their safety. But these letters never reached him. Indeed they never left the island. They were considered rich booty by the head of government, to whom they were conveyed by a servant of Mr. Lenox, bribed for the purpose.

Judge then of the horror of Mr. Ellingwood, after months of anxiety occasioned by the non-receipt of letters from Havanna, when one morning he read in his newspaper a detailed account of the insurrection, the quelling of it, and the number of persons killed, wounded, or taken prisoners, together with the announcement that the names of these would appear in the ensuing number.

But Mr. Ellingwood, after the first surprise was over, began to consider that there could be no immediate danger to his friends. He knew that his uncle had always taken neutral ground, that he was respected by both parties, and that he would learn the intention of the rebels in season to remove his family, if occasion required.

Alas! he dreamed not of the change in his uncle's feelings, and that he was fearfully implicated in the rebellion. Still he felt so uneasy he could not remain inactive; and he determined to start for London in the evening coach.

His first business, when there, was to proceed to the office from which his paper was issued, as the most direct source of obtaining farther information.

His loss of sleep, for he had travelled all night, together with his anxiety, had by this time wrought his mind and nerves to the highest pitch of excitement.

If he met friends who cordially greeted him, he imagined they were endeavoring to prepare his mind to receive some fresh and sad intelligence.

Yet he would not allow to himself that there was cause for anxiety. He tried to persuade himself that he was only afraid the excitement might retard the recovery of his wife, or possibly produce a relapse.

He reached the office of the "Times," and went in with a number of others who were eager for farther news. He took a paper, and began with a trembling hand to open it in order to read.

The office was filled with gentlemen eagerly listening to an account which some one was giving from head-quarters, when amid the cries of "good—good—served them right!"—a loud shriek startled them, as Mr. Ellingwood rushed from the room. In running his eye hastily over the columns, the first name which had caught his attention on the list of those that were shot, was that of "James Lenox of Lenox Hall."

His blood had frozen in his veins; but despair had given him strength to proceed; and farther on he had read the names of "Mrs. Lenox and Mrs. Ellingwood with her daughter, who were shot in attempting to flee from the officers sent to capture them. Mrs. Ellingwood was an English lady residing in the family of Mr. Lenox, and was said to have been active among the insurgents, and a dangerous person, as had been found from her private correspondence as well as from her presence at most of the secret assemblies."

Mr. Ellingwood read every word; or rather at a glance the truth of the whole flashed upon his

mind, and with one cry from his breaking heart he burst out of his room. He pressed his hands to his forehead as he rushed along the street. He saw a coach passing and mechanically jumped in. He neither asked nor cared where he was going. He stopped when the coach stopped and found himself at a country inn, when he at once retired to his room.

But before morning the whole house were affrighted and aroused from their beds by the cries of the afflicted man, who was suffering from a violent attack of brain fever.

The physician, who was hastily called, at first apprehended that his patient was suffering from remorse of conscience, as he was continually crying, "Oh! see her fall, she's shot through the heart!"—and then seemed trying to escape, saying, "here is a safe place; they will never search for us here."

But the next day upon examining some papers found in his pocket-book, his name and residence were ascertained, and the fearful cause of his illness came to light, as they discovered crowded into his coat-pocket the account which had proved so overpowering to him.

Notice was immediately sent to his friends, and on the following day his family physician and particular friend, Dr. Crosby, arrived, accompanied by Mary and Susan, the faithful house-keeper.

For many days there was no hope of his recovery. He had, however, naturally a strong constitution, which, aided by medical skill and tender nursing, through the blessing of God the dangerous crisis was past and the patient was pronounced convalescent. From the first dawn of returning reason he had seemed to remember his dreadful loss.

When he opened his eyes and recognized Mary standing by his side, he said in a whisper, as if speaking to himself, "Motherless child, oh! my God, thou art but just to take what was thine own; help me to say from the heart, 'thy will be done.'"

Mary burst into tears; for a moment the strict injunctions of Dr. Crosby were forgotten, and she gave free vent to her feelings. But this violence of grief seemed to affect her father differently from what the physician apprehended, for gently taking her hand, he said, "Poor Mary—poor father—we must seek help there," pointing up.

The last word was hardly audible. The raised hand fell back upon the pillow, and he seemed about to faint. Mary motioned quickly to Susan, who wet his lips with a cordial prepared by the doctor.

It had been a source of astonishment to all,

that Mary had so controlled her own feelings as to be a source of real service to her father. She had plead with Dr. Crosby, whom she had known from a child; she had promised faithfully to follow his directions in all things; and when told that it might prove fatal to her father if he should see her weep, she had choked back the tears and shown him that she could control her emotion. She now charged herself with unfaithfulness to her promise, and feared lest she should be excluded from her father's sick-room.

But when the doctor next visited his patient, indeed he spent most of the time in his chamber, he expressed himself highly gratified at the favorable change which had taken place; and Mary's joy knew no bounds.

The patient improved so rapidly, that the physician, after a long and free conversation with Mr. Ellingwood, thought he might safely leave him.

The sick man felt that he had sinned in idolizing his wife and children, and that God in righteousness had taken them from him; but he could say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him." During the greater part of the time he was composed and appeared to be much engaged in prayer.

He clung to Mary as a child would cling to a sister; and when she left the room, he would call her and beg her not to leave him. His helplessness, which almost amounted to childishness, so alarmed Susan, that she consulted the physician with reference to it. He assured her that it could scarcely be otherwise. His mind had received a shock, of which time alone could effect a cure; and, in his feeble condition, he clung to Mary as all who remained to him.

Four weeks from the time of his arrival at the inn, Mr. Ellingwood, with Mary and Susan, took their departure from it. The faithful woman, who was now looked upon in the light of a companion, so nobly had she conducted through all these trials, had made a short visit to Rosedale, to see that everything was prepared for the comfort of the invalid, and had returned only the preceding day. Mary, poor girl, tried to look cheerful; but it would have been a luxury to her to have thrown herself into Susan's arms and have had a hearty cry. She felt that it would do her good; but the thought of her dear afflicted father restrained her. He looked so very, very sad; he never smiled now, and she feared to afflict him by the sight of her grief.

In the four weeks since she left her home, Mary seemed to have lived whole years. She looked back a few short months, to the time when Alice and herself were two gay and laughing girls. Now she was alone, and how changed!

SIXTEEN months from the date of the foregoing chapter we will again look in upon the family at Rosedale. Mary still sits at the head of the table, and is trying to make her father appreciate her skill in cake making, pressing him to partake of some.

He says, "Yes, yes, my daughter!"

"But, papa, you are thinking of something else. Isn't it nice? Susan says it's your favorite cake."

A sickly smile passed over his face as he replied gently, "Thank you, Mary, it is very good."

"And, papa," continued the young girl, determining to follow up the advantage she had gained, lest he should fall back into his abstract state, "have you decided yet about my taking lessons of that beautiful lady? I love her dearly, and I do wish I could."

"I will try to attend to the matter to-day, my dear."

"Oh! thank you, dear papa, when shall I remind you?"

"Directly after dinner." So saying, he returned to his study.

Mr. Ellingwood was a changed man. His hair had become quite grey; his step, which had been full of life and elasticity, was now slow and courteous. He seldom smiled; but when he did, it was a smile that went to the heart, and made you feel more than any words could have done that he was a stricken man. Yet his parishioners loved him, if possible, better than ever, for he entered with increased tenderness and sympathy into all their trials, and sought their spiritual welfare with renewed zeal. He exhorted them to set their affection upon things above, and not upon things on the earth. On only one occasion had he referred in public to his own peculiar trials; and then he said that he feared he had set his affections too much upon the treasures which God had given him, had loved the creature more than the Creator; and that his heavenly Father had in love taken the temptation from him, that he might wean him from earth and prepare him to meet those dear ones above. While he thus addressed his beloved people his own was the only dry eye in the sanctuary; and as he pointed upward, there were many present who felt that he would not long be detained from his heavenly home.

As soon as they had dined Mary went into the hall, and taking from thence her father's hat and cane, brought them into him, saying, "You see, papa, I have not forgotten."

"Nor I, my dear, I will go at once. Would you like to go with me?"

"Oh! yes, papa, that I should."

"Well, then, run and get ready."

Mary was soon prepared for the walk, and joyfully calling Ponto, they set out for the residence of the music teacher. Lucy Mansfield was the daughter of a lawyer in Cheswell; but her mother having died when she was very young, she had been adopted and well educated by her aunt recently deceased; and Lucy had returned to her father's house.

She was at this time twenty-five years of age, though from her timidity she appeared much younger; and when she found her father feeble and destitute of many comforts she wished him to enjoy, she felt that she ought to make use of her talents for his support. But Lucy was very diffident and distrustful of her own powers, and had not courage to apply for pupils.

A short time before this she had been requested to play the organ in Mr. Ellingwood's church during the absence of the organist; and such was her success that her friends immediately proposed to her to teach music, promising if she would consent to obtain her a sufficient number of pupils. Mr. Ellingwood had not yet been introduced to Miss Mansfield, but after this time as Mary took regular lessons, it quite naturally fell in his way to call for her and take her home. Then he often led her to talk of her teacher.

Though he conversed very little with her, yet Miss Mansfield's quiet, unobtrusive manner seemed to soothe him; and he gradually became more and more fond of her society, until at length he spent two or three evenings in a week with her and her aged father. Mary usually accompanied him, and the three read in turn, or the teacher and pupil sang together. Mary by this time had become very fond of her friend; and when Mr. Ellingwood took her one day into his study, and told her that Miss Mansfield would soon be her mother, he found he had not over-rated the pleasure such intelligence would give her. Nineteen months had passed since the fearful breaking up of their family circle, and time had allayed the poignancy of her grief. Life still looked fair before, and she rejoiced in the prospect of having in Miss Mansfield a friend and a mother. She ran to communicate the intelligence to Susan; but her father had done so before her.

"I don't know," exclaimed she, "any one in the world whom I could call *mother* but my dear, dear teacher."

Susan with a sigh confessed to herself that if there must be another Mrs. Ellingwood, she could think of none more suited to the station than the one in question. The thought of having a gay, flaunting lady come there would be dreadful; but Miss Mansfield was very different.

It would be doing injustice to the Rector at Rosedale not to say, that in all his intercourse with that lady, he had been perfectly frank and honest as to the state of his own heart. He told her he was a crushed man, that if his Emily had sickened and died where he could have been by her side, he might have felt differently; but now the object of his best affections was in the grave. Yet he assured her that her presence soothed, comforted, and helped him to the more faithful performance of his duty; that he loved her with the affection he should feel for a tenderly beloved sister; and that if she with her aged father would share his home, she should never have reason to repent her decision.

Lucy was greatly agitated; more so than he had supposed she could be. She loved him with all the fervor of a first love, but was not aware of it herself until that moment. She had always believed he would never marry again, and thought herself only sympathizing in his sufferings. No one could see him without feeling that he was a sufferer. She felt grateful for his preference, and consented to be his. She told him nothing of the wild joy that filled her heart; she felt that it would be out of place; she began thus early to put a constraint upon her own feelings, and allowed him to believe that her love was as calm as his own.

In a few weeks they were quietly married in Mr. Ellingwood's study. He could not endure a public wedding in church. It would bring too forcibly to mind the days long passed. When the reverend bishop performed the ceremony, especially when he said, "I require and charge you both, that if either of you do know any impediment why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it." Oh! why did no one whisper even then, "*Thine own dear Emily yet liveth.*"

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

MADELINE AND FRANCES.

FROM THE FRENCH OF EMILE SOUVESTRE.

A GRAND resolve had just decided me to depart from my usual habits: the evening before, I had seen by the advertisements, that the next day was a holiday at Sevres, and that the china manufactory would be open to the public. I was tempted by the beauty of the morning, and suddenly decided to go there.

I found myself in a railroad carriage with two middle-aged sisters. A few civilities were sufficient to gain me their confidence, and after some minutes I was acquainted with their whole history.

They were two poor women, left orphans at fifteen, and had lived ever since as those who work for their livelihood must live, by economy and privation. For the last twenty or thirty years they had worked in jewelery in the same house; they had seen ten masters succeed one another, and make their fortunes in it, without any change in their own lot. They had always lived in the same room, at the end of one of the passages in the Rue St. Denis, where the air and the sun are unknown. They began their work before daylight, went on with it till after night-fall, and saw year succeed to year without their lives being marked by any other events than the Sunday service, a walk, or an illness.

The younger of those worthy women was forty, and obeyed her sister, as she did when a child. The elder looked after her, took care of her, and scolded her with a mother's tenderness. At first it was amusing; afterward one could not help seeing something affecting in these two grey-haired children, one unable to leave off the habit of obeying, the other that of protecting.

And it was not in that alone that my two companions seemed younger than their years; they knew so little that their wonder never ceased. We had hardly arrived at Clamart, before they involuntarily exclaimed, like the king in the children's game, that *they did not think the world was so great!*

It was the first time they had trusted themselves on a railroad, and it was amusing to see their sudden shocks, their alarms, and their courageous determination; everything was a marvel to them! They had a remains of youth within them, which made them sensible to things which usually only strike us in childhood. Poor

creatures! they had still the feelings of another age, though they had lost its charms.

But was there not something holy in this simplicity, which had been preserved to them by abstinence from all the joys of life? Ah! accursed be he who first had the bad courage to attach ridicule to that name of Old Maid, which recalls so many images of grievous deception, of dreariness, and of abandonment! accursed be he who can find a subject for sarcasm in involuntary misfortune, and who can crown grey hairs with thorns!

The two sisters were called Frances and Madeline; this day's journey was a feat of courage without example in their lives. The fever of the times had infected them unawares. Yesterday, Madeline had suddenly proposed the idea of the expedition, and Frances had accepted it immediately. Perhaps it would have been better not to have yielded to the temptation offered by her young sister; but "we have our follies at all ages," as the prudent Frances philosophically remarked. As for Madeline, there are no regrets or doubts for her; she is the life-guardsmen of the establishment.

"We really must amuse ourselves," said she; "we do but live once."

And the elder sister smiled at this Epicurean maxim. It was evident that the fever of independence was at its crisis in both of them.

And in truth it would have been a great pity if any scruple had interfered with their happiness, it was so frank and genial! The sight of the trees, which seemed to fly on both sides of the road, caused them unceasing admiration. The meeting a train passing in the contrary direction with the noise and rapidity of a thunderbolt, made them shut their eyes and utter a cry; but it had already disappeared! They look round, take courage again, and express themselves full of astonishment at the marvel.

Madeline declares that such a sight is worth the expense of the journey, and Frances would have agreed with her, if she had not recollected, with some little alarm, the deficit which such an expense must make in their budget. The three francs spent upon this single expedition, were the savings of a whole week of work. Thus the joy of the elder of the two sisters was mixed with

remorse; the prodigal child now and then turned back his eyes toward the back street of St. Denis.

But the motion and the succession of objects distract her; see the bridge of the Val surrounded by its lovely landscape: on the right, Paris with its grand monuments, which rise through the fog, or sparkle in the sun; on the left, Meudon, with its villas, its woods, its vines, and its royal castle! The two workmen look from one window to the other with exclamations of delight. One fellow passenger laughs at their childish wonder; but to myself it is very touching, for I see in it the sign of a long and monotonous seclusion: they are the prisoners of work, who have recovered liberty and fresh air for a few hours.

At last the train stops, and we get out. I show the two sisters the path that leads to Sevres, between the railway and the gardens, and they go on before, while I inquire about the time of returning.

I soon join them again at the next station, where they have stopped at the little garden belonging to the gate-keeper; both are already in deep conversation with him while he digs his garden borders, and marks out the places for flower seeds. He informs them that it is the time for hoeing out weeds, for making grafts and layers, for sowing annuals, and for destroying the insects on the rose-trees. Madeline has on the sill of her window two wooden boxes, in which, for want of air and sun, she has never been able to make anything grow but mustard and cress; but she persuades herself, that, thanks to this information, all other plants may henceforth thrive in them. At last the gate-keeper, who is sowing a border with mignonette, gives her the rest of the seeds which he does not want, and the old maid goes off delighted, and begins to act over again the dream of Perette and her can of milk, with these flowers of her imagination.

The hour arrives at which the doors of the porcelain manufactory, and the museum of pottery, are open to the public. Frightened at finding themselves in the midst of such regal magnificence, the sisters hardly dare walk; they speak in a low tone, as if they were in a church.

I encourage them to go on; I walk first, and they make up their minds to follow me.

What wonders are brought together in this collection! Here we see clay moulded into every shape, tinted with every color, and combined with every sort of substance!

Earth and wood are the first substances worked upon by man, and seem more particularly meant for his use. They, like the domestic animals, are the essential accessories of his life; therefore

there must be a more intimate connection between them and us. Stone and metals require long preparations; they resist our first efforts, and belong less to the individual than to communities. Earth and wood are, on the contrary, the principal instruments of the isolated being who must feed and shelter himself.

This, doubtless, makes me feel so much interested in the collection I am examining. These cups so roughly modeled by the savage, admit me to a knowledge of some of his habits; these elegant yet incorrectly formed vases of the Indian tell me of a declining intelligence, in which still glimmers the twilight of what was once bright sunshine; these jars, loaded with arabesques, show the fancy of the Arab rudely and ignorantly copied by the Spaniard! We find here the stamp of every race, every country, and every age.

My companions seemed little interested in these historical associations: they looked at all with that credulous admiration which leaves no room for examination or discussion. Madeline read the name written under every piece of workmanship, and her sister answered with an exclamation of wonder.

In this way we reached a little court-yard, where they had thrown away the fragments of some broken china. Frances perceived a colored saucer almost whole, of which she took possession, as a record of the visit she was making; henceforth she would have a specimen of the Sevres china, *which is only made for kings!* I would not undeceive her, by telling her that the products of the manufactory are sold all over the world, and that her saucer, before it was cracked, was the same as those that are bought at the shops for sixpence! Why should I destroy the illusions of her humble existence? Are we to break down the hedge-flowers which perfume our paths? Things are oftenest nothing in themselves; the thoughts we attach to them alone give them value. To rectify innocent mistakes, in order to recover some useless reality, is to be like those learned men who will see nothing in a plant but the chemical elements of which it is composed.

On leaving the manufactory, the two sisters, who had taken possession of me with the freedom of artlessness, invited me to share the luncheon they had brought with them. I declined at first, but they insisted with so much good-nature, that I feared to pain them, and with some awkwardness I gave way.

We had only to look for a convenient spot. I led them up the hill, and we found a plot of grass enameled with daisies, and shaded by two walnut-trees.

Madeline could not contain herself for joy.

All her life she had dreamt of a dinner out on the grass! While helping her sister to take the provisions from the basket, she tells me of all her expeditions into the country that had been planned, and put off. Frances, on the other hand, was brought up at Montmorency, and before she became an orphan, she had often gone back to her nurse's house. That which had the attraction of novelty for her sister, had for her the charm of recollection. She told the vintage harvests to which her parents had taken her; the rides on Mother Lure's donkey, that they could not make go to the right without pulling him to the left; the cherry gathering; and the sails on the lake.

These recollections have all the charm and freshness of childhood. Frances recalls to herself less what she has seen than what she has felt. Whilst she is talking the cloth is laid, and we sit down under a tree. Before us winds the valley of Sevres, its many-storied houses abutting upon the gardens and the slopes of the hill: on the other side spreads out the park of St. Cloud, with its magnificent clumps of trees interspersed with meadows: above, stretch the heavens like an immense ocean, in which the clouds are sailing! I look at this beautiful country, and I listen to these good old maids; I admire, and I am interested; and time passes gently on without my perceiving it.

At last the sun sets, and we have to think of returning. Whilst Madeline and Frances clear away the dinner, I walk down to the manufactory to ask the hour. The merry-making is at its height; the blasts of the trombones resound from the band under the acacias; for a few moments I forget myself with looking about; but I have promised the two sisters to take them back to the Bellevue Station: the train cannot wait, and I make haste to climb the path again which leads to the walnut-trees.

Just before I reached them, I heard voices on the other side of the hedge; Madeline and Frances were speaking to a poor girl whose clothes were burnt, her hands blackened, and her face tied up with blood-stained bandages. I saw that she was one of the girls employed at the

gunpowder mills, which are built higher up on the common. An explosion had taken place a few days before; the girl's mother and elder sister were killed; she herself escaped by a miracle, and was now left without any means of support. She told all this with the resigned and unhopeful manner of one who has always been accustomed to suffer. The two sisters were much affected; I saw them consulting with one another in a low tone; then Frances took thirty sous out of a little coarse silk purse, which was all they had left, and gave them to the poor girl. I hastened on to that side of the hedge; but, before I reached it, I met the two old sisters, who called out to me that they would not return by the railway, but on foot!

I then understood that the money they had meant for the journey, had just been given to the beggar! Good, like evil, is contagious; I run to the poor wounded girl, give her the sum that was to pay for my own place, and return to Frances and Madeline, and tell them I will walk with them.

I am just come back from taking them home; and have left them delighted with their day, the recollection of which will long make them happy!

This morning I was pitying those whose lives are obscure and joyless; now, I understand that God has provided a compensation with every trial. The smallest pleasure derives from rarity a relish otherwise unknown. Enjoyment is only what we feel to be such, and the luxurious man feels no longer; satiety has lost him his appetite, while privation preserves to the other that first of earthly blessings—the *being easily made happy*. Oh! that I could persuade every one of this! that so the rich might not abuse their riches, and that the poor might have patience. If happiness is the rarest of blessings, it is because the reception of it is the rarest of virtues.

Madeline and Frances! Ye poor old maids! whose courage, resignation, and generous hearts are your only wealth, pray for the wretched who give themselves up to despair; for the unhappy who hate and envy; and for the unfeeling into whose enjoyments no pity enters!

THE ORPHANS FROM THE ALMS-HOUSE.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by Edward Stephens, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 278.

CHAPTER IX.

Four years!—yes, I think it was a little over four years, after the scene in our last chapter, when we bring our readers to the old homestead again.

It was the evening of a disagreeable, chilly day. Everything was gloomy inside and out. Salina had come up from the Farnham's deserted mansion to spend the evening with aunt Hannah, and arrange the preliminaries for a "husking frolic," which was to take place on the morrow in uncle Nathan's barn. But she found the good lady so taciturn and gloomy, that even her active spirit was awed into stillness. So the two women remained almost in silence, knitting steadily, with a round candle-stand between them.

Uncle Nathan, notwithstanding the cold and the storm, occupied his great chair in the porch. I think the old man must have grown a trifle stouter since the reader saw him, and his face had a still more benevolent look: something of serene goodness, mellowed in the sunshine of his genial nature, was perceptible there, as the tints of a golden pepper when ripened in the autumn sun.

But you could see nothing of this, as the old man sat in his easy-chair that night. Everything was dark around him. Black clouds hung overhead, broken now and then with gleams of pale blue lightning. Once or twice these flashes were bright enough to reveal his features, which were strangely troubled and thoughtful. Since nightfall, he had been sitting there almost in silence, watching the storm gather overhead, and the black shadows as they crowded down from the hills and choked up the garden. He watched the wind as it rose and swelled down the valley, rushing through the orchard boughs, and tossing them up and down in the darkness. The old man was not reposing; thoughtful and aroused he took a clear retrospection of those phases of life that had left scars even on his placid heart.

A shadow, for it seemed nothing more, lingered by his side. It moved now and then, and amid

the hushes of the wind you might have known that two persons breathed close together in the old porch.

At length what seemed the shadow spoke,

"Shall we go in, uncle Nathan? The wind is getting high here. How the rain beats on the porch—you will catch cold!"

"No, I'd rather sit out here yet awhile. But go in yourself, Mary; it is getting rather chilly for you."

"No," answered Mary, in her old gentle way, "I'd rather sit with you, uncle Nat."

"I'm bad company," said the old man, "somehow I can't feel like talking to-night."

"Nor I," said Mary Fuller, leaning her cheek against the arm-chair, "something is the matter with us both. I wonder what it is!"

"My heart is full," said uncle Nathan, mournfully.

Mary crept close to him.

"Tell me, uncle Nat, is it about Mr. Ratet's note that you feel so bad?"

"That may have set me to thinking of—of other things. I seem to remember everything that ever happened to-night, I never saw clouds exactly like them before, or heard the wind howl so, but once."

"When was that, uncle Nathan?" inquired his companion, in a whisper.

"The night our sister Anna died," answered the old man, in the same hushed tone.

"Uncle Nathan, do tell me about her, I want to hear it so much, it seems as if I must ask you now, though I never dared before."

Uncle Nathan remained silent a minute or two, then turning in his chair, he said in a low, husky voice,

"See what they are doing in there. Hannah must not hear what we are talking about."

Mary opened the kitchen door and looked through.

"They are sitting by the fire, both of them. Salina is talking. Aunt Hannah knitting hard, with her eyes on the fire, as if she didn't hear." And reseating herself, she continued, "now tell

me about her, she was very handsome, wasn't she?"

"She was like a picture, Mary. You think Isabel Chester handsome, but she don't begin to compare with our Anna. She had the softest and most beautiful brown eyes you ever saw, bright as a star and soft as a rabbit's—and such hair, it was all in wrinkles and waves, breaking out into curls let her braid and twist it as she would—brown when she sat by me at her sewing work in the morning, and shining out like gold when the sun lay in the porch, and she was drawing at her length of woollen yarn, and running it up on the spindle as bright and spry as a bird.

"I wasn't so old nor so heavy," continued uncle Nathan, with a sigh, "as I am now-a-days, but she always loved to wait on me just as you do; and when I came into the stoop, hot days in summer, tired with mowing or planting, away she would run after a pitcher of cool drink, holding it between her two little hands, and laughing till the dimples swarmed about her mouth like lady-bugs around a rose. I do really think, Mary Fuller, that our sister Anna was the handsomest gal I ever sot eyes on, and so sweet tempered: you put me in mind of her every day, Mary."

Mary Fuller did not answer, she was afraid that uncle Nathan might detect the tears that swelled from her heart in her voice.

"I didn't like to part with Anna, she was so young, and both sister and I had promised our parents to take their place with her. We two were the children of their youth, but she was a sort of ewe lamb in the house, the child of their old age, and when they died we looked upon her as our own. We both gave up all ideas of marrying for her sake; that was something for Hannah, she was a tall, good-looking woman then, and might have done well in the world; she did give up a match that I knew her heart was set on. As for me—but no matter about that—I wasn't likely to make a promise to my own parents on their death beds and only half keep it, by marrying and putting a sort of step-mother over Anna—no, Hannah and I just put away all thoughts of settling for life, except with one another, and gave ourselves up to little Anna, heart and soul."

The old man paused awhile, and bent his head as if overpowered by the fierce storm that raged around the house. The porch was sheltered, and though the rain rushed over its low eaves in sheets, no portion of it reached the great easy-chair upon which uncle Nathan sat. Still Mary felt two or three heavy drops fall upon her hand, too warm for rain and too sacred for comment.

"I couldn't help it," resumed uncle Nathan, in a broken voice: "From the first I was agin Anna's going out to work, but she wanted a new silk dress, and we, in our old-fashioned ideas objected to it—so in her pretty, wilful fashion she determined to earn it for herself. I always thought Hannah had a hankering after the dress too, for she never thought anything too good for the gal, but there was a good many debts left on the old place, and she knew well enough that we couldn't afford to indulge the child that way; but she sided with Anna agin me, and so the poor child went up to Farnhams to spin his wool as I have told you. Salina kept house, and no one thought harm of it. I shall never forget how bright and pretty she looked, that morning, in her pink calico dress and that little straw cottage. Her cheeks were rosy as the dress, and her eyes shone like diamonds, when she came out here to shake hands with me.

"I felt hurt, and couldn't help looking so. She saw how I took it, and tried to laugh in her old cheerful way, but it was of no use; the sound died on her open lips, and her eyes filled with tears. 'Nathan, Nathan,' she said, 'I will give up the dress if you feel so about it,' and she began to untie her bonnet, 'I never had a silk dress in my life, but—but——' she sat down on a stool and fairly burst into sobs. 'Anna,' says I, 'couldn't we make it out, and you stay at home, think? There is Hannah's orange silk gown, that mother gave her years ago, wouldn't that make over for you nicely now?' Anna threw herself back on the stool and laughed like a bird, while the tears sparkled in her eyes. 'Oh, Nathan, don't speak of it, I've tried it on a dozen times, and thought and thought how to make it do, but the waist is under my arms, the skirt gored like an umbrella cover, and so scant, why I couldn't get over a fence or jump a brook in it to save my life.' I answered, 'But you look so nice and pretty in that pink calico, Anna, I wish a silk dress had never come into your head. I'm afraid it'll be the ruin of you.' 'My pink calico!' said the naughty child, lifting up a fold between her thumb and finger, and eyeing me, sideways, like a pet bird as she was, 'don't you think, brother Nat, that I was born for something better than pink calico?' I couldn't keep from laughing, and at that she threw her arms round my neck, and thanked me for letting her go.

"Mary Fuller, my heart sunk like lead as the door closed after her. But what could I do? she would have her own way. She had it, Mary Fuller, the gal had her way!"

Once more the old man paused, while drops fell thick and heavy on Mary Fuller's hand.

"Anna staid three months at Mr. Farnham's, but she came home at last with her silk dress, happy as a lark and handsomer than ever. The dress was heavy white silk. Mr. Farnham had bought it for her in York. 'But what did you get white for, Anna?' says I, as she unfolded the silk, smiling and looking with her bright, eager eyes in my face, 'it isn't a color for use—this comes of trusting young girls to choose things for themselves.' 'I didn't choose it—it was Mr. Farnham,' says she, blushing up to her temples, and trying to laugh. 'Well, what did he get this useless color for?' says Hannah, holding up the silk with one of her stern looks, that I could see made poor Anna tremble from head to foot. 'It will be spoiled the first time of wearing! fit for nothing on earth but the wedding dress of some great lady.' 'It is a wedding dress—that's what Mr. Farnham bought it for,' says Anna, bursting out a crying, while her face was as red as a wild rose. Hannah dropped the silk as if it had been a coal of fire, and her face turned white as a curd. She looked at me, and I at her, then we both looked at Anna. Poor girl! how frightened she was! First she turned to sister; but Hannah was taken by surprise and didn't know how to act—then she crept toward me with a sort of smile on her mouth and her eyes pleading for her, as I've seen a rabbit when taken from a trap—I just reached out one arm without knowing it, and drew her close to my bosom. She flung her arms around my neck and then we both burst out a crying, while Hannah sat down in a chair with her hands folded hard in her lap, and looked on, growing whiter and whiter every minute. 'It's true, brother,' whispered Anna, at last, hiding her face again mine, 'I'm going to be married—kiss me, please, and just whisper that you like it.' I couldn't help kissing her hot cheeks, though every word went to my heart, for I saw well enough how Hannah would take it.

"Anna lunged around me till I had kissed her more than once, I'm afraid, then she drew away from my arm, like a child that's afraid to stand alone, and went up to sister Hannah. 'Sister, wont you kiss me, as well as Nathan?' says she, in her sweet, coaxing way. But Hannah sat still, white as ever. She only gave her fingers a closer gripe around each other. Anna sunk down to the floor, bending her ankle back and sitting upon the heel of one little foot. 'Mother Hannah, don't be cross—what harm have I done?' says she, lifting her sweet face, all wet with tears, to meet the hard set look of our sister. 'Mother Hannah,' says the girl again, drawing her face closer and closer, 'won't you kiss me, as Nathan has?' Hannah bent her head, and it seemed as

if a marble woman had moved. She touched the girl's forehead with her lips, and, says she, 'God forgive you!'

"I think to this day that sister meant, 'God bless you,' and tried to say it, but 'God forgive you!' came from her lips in spite of that. This frightened Anna. So with a sort of wild look toward me, the girl got up and went out of the room, crying as if her heart would break. She couldn't understand the thing at all.

"The minute she was gone, Hannah unlocked her hands, that shook like dead leaves in parting from each other, and holding them out toward me, she cried out, 'Nathan, Nathan!' and fell down in a fainting fit, just as she did the other night."

"But why," said Mary Fuller, drawing a deep breath, "why did aunt Hannah feel so dreadfully, wasn't Mr. Farnham a good man?"

Uncle Nathan bent down his head and whispered the reply.

"I told you, when our last parent died, Hannah gave up all thoughts of marrying. She had thought of it day and night for two years. Mr. Farnham was the man."

"Poor aunt Hannah," murmured Mary, "it was hard."

"She was up next morning and got breakfast just as usual," said uncle Nathan, "from that day to this she has never spoken of that fainting fit. You see what Hannah is now, she was not so silent or so hard before that day.

"But Anna's wedding was put off," resumed uncle Nathan, after a pause, "Mr. Farnham had gone down to York about some of his affairs, and finally concluded to go into business there. He wrote that it would be some months before he could settle things and come after her. Poor little Anna, how she did practice writing, and how much letter paper the creature tore up and wasted in answering the long letters that came at first every week, then every fortnight, and at last irregularly and at longer and longer intervals apart. She became uneasy, and I could see that Hannah grew sterner and more set every day.

"The next summer a painter came into these parts for his health and to study the shape of trees and rocks as they really grow. He put up at the tavern down in the village and spent his time among the hills, taking pictures of the scenery, as he called them. He took a fancy to the old house here, and I caught him one day sitting across the road on a stool and taking it off on paper. It was about our dinner time, and so I asked him in to take a bite with us.

"He was a clever, gentlemanly sort of a fellow,

not over young, nor much of a dandy, and we all took a sort of liking to him; Hannah, because he'd got a genuine picture of the homestead, and maybe I felt that too a little, for we both set everything by the old place—Anna took to him at first; she loved the homestead as well as we did almost, besides the painter came from York, and she seemed to fancy him for that more than anything else.

"I remember, Anna only got one letter from Mr. Farnham all summer, and that was the only one she did not, sooner or later, let me read. She lost her spirits and really grew thin. The artist was a good deal of company for her; she had talent, he said, and a few lessons would learn her to paint pictures almost as well as himself. He was old enough to be the girl's father, and so Hannah, and I were glad to have him there to cheer her up.

"All at once she took a dislike to the man, and when he came to the house, she would always find something to busy herself about, up stairs, or in the cheese-room. Mr. Sanders seemed to feel this, and after awhile it was as much as I could do to get him into the house.

"One day toward fall Salina came home from the square-house with a letter that she gave to Anna, who ran up stairs to read it alone.

"Salina was the only person in the village that knew of Anna's engagement to Mr. Farnham. His letters had always come under cover to her, and she loved the girl as if she had been her own sister. Like the rest of us, she had thought it strange, that he did not write as usual, and was as proud as a peacock when this letter came.

"Anna stayed up stairs a long time, reading her letter, while Salina and I talked it over in the porch. 'I reckon,' says she, 'that we shall have the white dress made up within a week or so. Then, uncle Nat, I'll show you what a genuine house warming is. Just think of little Anna's being the mistress of our house, instead of Hannah!' I felt a little anxious somehow and did not answer at once. She was going to speak again, when we heard the front door shut to, with a sort of groan, as if a pang had passed through it. And so there had, for when we got to the entry and looked out, Anna was a good way from the house, with her bonnet and shawl on, and running in a wild hurry down the street. 'She's gone to see the dressmaker,' says Salina, winking her right eye-lid, and giving me a cunning look from the other eye, 'see the bundle under her arm, didn't I tell you?'

"I wanted to believe her and we went back to the porch. But there was a strange feeling about me, and I couldn't sit still in the old chair, no

more than if it had been made of red hot iron. As for Hannah——"

The old man paused again, and for some moments the rushing sound of the storm was all that filled the porch. When he spoke, it was with a sort of desperate effort, as if all that was left for him to tell were full of pain.

"Anna did not come back in three days, and then Mr. Sanders, the painter, came with her. She was his wife."

"His wife!" uttered Mary Fuller, "but the letter from Mr. Farnham!"

"It told her that he was married to a city lady. You have seen her, Mary Fuller; it was the woman who came with you into these parts. But you never saw the poor girl they murdered between them, none of us will ever see little Anna again."

Mary was silent, listening to the old man's sobs as they mingled with the storm.

"She came back with her husband," uttered the old man, "the whitest and stillest creature you ever saw. Her husband loved her, and she was so gentle and submissive to him. Poor fellow, poor fellow, he deserved something better than the dead ashes that she had to give him.

"Sanders was nothing but a poor scene painter, wanting to do something better, but with no power to do it. He could dream of beautiful things, and then pine his soul out, because his hand failed in making them. But he had a true, good heart, that was our only comfort when Anna went away with him to live in the city. 'Why did you act so wildly, Anna,' says I, as she crept to my chair and laid her head so sorrowfully on my knee the night before they went away, 'we would have worked ourselves to death, poor child, if you had only staid in the old place—what possessed you that night, Anna?' 'He will never know that I was the forsaken one,' says she, and her cheeks burned with crimson once more. 'I only thought at first of that, but in the pain that his letter gave me, I remembered that which I had dealt on a good man that loved me—I was wild, brother Nathan, but not bad. Poor Sanders, I will make him a humble, patient wife, see if I don't.' And she did, Mary Fuller—the poor girl did make a dutiful, good wife; but it was enough to break your heart to see her trying so hard to please a man, that wanted nothing but her love to make him happy, and knew that she could not give him that."

CHAPTER X.

AFTER awhile the old man resumed.

"The next year Farnham came up into the

mountains with his wife. Some city speculation had made him rich, and they cut a terrible dash—but I won't speak of that, Mary. If ever the old adversary does rise in my bosom, it is when I remember the way those two persons drove by the house they had made gloomy as a grave-yard. Hannah was sitting by the window. Her face seemed turning into stone as the woman leaned out of her carriage, gave a long, impudent stare, and then fell back laughing, as if she had found something about my sister's appearance to make fun of.

"A little after this, Anna came home. She wanted care and comfort, poor little darling, and Sanders let her search for it in the old homestead. Farnham went back to New York the day after she came, so I believe she never saw him to the day of his death. Mrs. Farnham was left behind, and poor Salina had a nice time with her airs and the impudence of her city servants, as she called the white slaves that came with her. Our Anna came alone, for her husband could neither spend time nor money to bring her further than Catskill. He had been out of employment, and divided his last few dollars with Anna when they parted.

"She was very down-hearted all the time, and it was more than I could do to make her smile, though I tried to say a thousand droll things; and Hannah, I'm sure, it made my heart ache to see how she tried and tried to cheer the young thing up."

Here again the old man paused. By this time the storm was raging down the valley in a hurricane. The hoary old hemlocks on the river side shook and bent and tossed their gnarled limbs over the vexed waters with terrible fury. The winds roared and held a wild riot in the hill tops. In years and years so fierce a gust of weather had not been known in the mountain passes.

Uncle Nathan bowed his head, and, looking his hands, went on,

"It had been threatening weather all day, and everything looked gloomy inside and outside the house. At sunset the storm commenced just as it did to-night. It seems to me as if it was only yesterday—no—as if this was the very night," continued the old man in a faltering voice. "The wind howled among the trees, and tore down the valley, just as it does now. The rain came down in buckets full, rolling like volleys of shot on the roof, then pouring in sheets of water over the eaves. Out yonder you could see the old apple trees tossing about, and groaning as they do this minute, like live things tormented by the storm. It was an awful night!"

"It is an awful night now!" murmured Mary Fuller, shivering. "How the rain beats, how the old trees tug and wrestle against the wind. The valley is full of fierce noises. I cannot even hear the river in all this rush of wind and water."

"So it was then," said uncle Nathan, "but there was another sound, that I seem to hear now deep in my very heart."

"What was it, uncle Nathan? A wolf or a panther? Such animals used to prowl among the hills here, I know."

"It was the cry of a young child, darter, of our Anna's baby; a little, feeble wail; but I should have heard it, if the storm had been twice as loud. I had been sitting here, from sundown to ten o'clock, with no company but my fears and the raging storm. Hannah came, once or twice, and put her pale face through the door, and went away again as if she wanted me out of the way, but for the whole world I couldn't have moved till that little cry came."

"But you went then," said Mary Fuller, deeply moved, "of course you went then."

"I got up to go, but it was of no use, my knees shook, and knocked together; the porch seemed whirling around, rain and all; I gave one look toward the out-room; fell into the chair again, and burst out a crying. The baby's voice had taken away all my strength."

"But you didn't sit here all night, in a storm like this?" said Mary.

"After awhile—I don't know how long—I got up and went into the house. Everything was still as death. I stood at the out-room door and listened. There was no noise. I thought it was the storm that drowned everything, and opened the door. Hannah was not there; nor Salina either, but a window had blown open, and in drifted the rain and wind over the bed that stood close by it—poor Anna's bed. I could not see distinctly, my eyes were blinded with the storm that leapt into my face, and I could hardly close the window again it.

"At last I got the sash down and went up to Anna's bed. She was there——"

"Well!" said Mary, at length, in a low whisper.

"She was there—all alone—dead—my little sister Anna!" answered the old man, covering his face with both hands, and crying till his sobs were carried away in the louder wail of the storm. "At first I could not believe it. A candle stood on the table, with its wick bent double. It had swirled away at the sides till the tallow ran down upon the brass. After I had shut the window, it gave out a steadier light; that fell on Anna's face. I would not believe it, but bent down and kissed her on the forehead. My lips weren't as cold as

hers then, I believe. Oh! darter, darter, darter, our poor little Anna was dead—dead—and cold—with the storm blowing over her."

Mary took uncle Nathan's hand between hers, and kissed it.

"Don't cry," said the old man, gently removing his hand, upon which her tears had fallen. "I can't help it, but you musn't cry. It was very hard at the time, and the old house has never been the same since, or at any rate," continued the kind old man, thoughtful of Mary's feelings even in his grief, "not till you came."

"But I can't be supposed to fill her place," said Mary, "she, so bright and handsome."

"I thought," answered uncle Nathan, "as I sat by her bed that night, and saw her laying there, so young, and with her bright hair falling in waves down the pillow, that one of God's own angels couldn't have looked more lovely. She was smiling in her death, just as I'd seen her a thousand times when she fell asleep. It seemed as if a kiss from brother Nathan would make her start up, and open those great brown eyes again; but when I gave the kiss it didn't wake her, but froze me almost into stone."

"But the cry you had heard?" said Mary.

"I forgot that, and never thought to ask why every lady had left poor dead Anna alone, with the swirling light and the storm. But the next day Hannah took me up into her bed room, and showed me our sister's child, a little boy, Mary, that might have been a comfort to us. I couldn't bear to look at it, lying there so innocent, like a young robin left alone in its nest, the sight of it broke my heart almost."

"But what became of it?"

"Hannah brought it up by hand a few weeks, and then went down to York with it herself, and left the poor baby with its father."

"How could she?" exclaimed Mary, "I wonder you could part with it."

"I did want to keep him, but Hannah was set in her way, and would not hear of it. She never looked at the helpless little fellow, as he lay there in Anna's bed, like a forsaken robin, without turning pale to the lips. It was enough to kill her!"

"You must have hated to give it up so much though," said Mary.

"She did her duty—Hannah always does, let what will come. Money has been sent, every year, to help bring the boy up. Let what would come she always scrimps and saves enough out of the old place for that."

"Perhaps it is this that has put you so behind hand," suggested the child, thoughtfully.

"I've often misdoubted it—but she's right."

I'd rather see the homestead sold, than have Anna's boy want anything; but somehow the drain comes heavier and heavier every year."

"And I! what am I but a burden?" said Mary, in a heart-broken voice. "What can I do? Surely, God intended some walk of usefulness to every one of his creation. Oh! uncle Nathan, tell me where mine lies!"

"You ain't much more helpless than I am," answered uncle Nathan, sadly. "It seems as if the more things go wrong, the more clumsy I grow, and the heavier I weigh. The chair is getting almost too small for me, and I ain't fit for anything but setting in it now." Mary shook her head, and a quaint smile stole across her lips in the darkness.

"You are too large, uncle Nathan, and I am too small: we are good for nothing but to comfort one another."

"And Hannah? you don't know how much she loves us both."

Mary was very thoughtful. The story she had heard for the first time; the rush of the storm; the darkness that seemed to surround her, body and soul, was cruelly depressing. It seemed like an epoch in her life, as if some grave event were approaching, in which she must hold a share.

"Now, darter," said uncle Nathan, laying his hand on her head, "you and I have got no secrets between us. It's the first time, in years, that I have mentioned Anna. We needn't be afraid to talk about her, now, when Hannah isn't by."

Just then, amid the turmoil of winds, and the tossing of trees, a burst of thunder shook the house to every stone of its foundation. Then came flash after flash of lightning, shooting long fiery trails through the rain, and spreading sheets of lurid flame in the air. Another crash, another burst of fire, and lo! a column of flame shot up into the blackened sky, lighting the river, the hills, and all the minute surroundings of uncle Nathan's house, as it were with a fiery catarract.

"It is the old hemlock by the river side," cried uncle Nathan, starting up, "that night it was struck for the first time, this night for the last," and he rushed out bareheaded, into the storm of fire and rain that deluged the valley.

Mary followed him. A little further down the valley was the grave-yard. The stones with which it was crowded gleamed cold and ghastly in the light of the burning hemlock. On two of these stones, somewhat apart, but facing the same way, Mary could see the black lines with gloomy distinctness.

"Isn't it strange?" said uncle Nathan, pointing

toward the stones, "isn't it strange that the light should fall strongest on those two graves, just as we were talking about them for the first time? What is going to happen now? That night two children came into the world, and one good soul went out of it. While Farnham's wife lay under her silk curtains, with her baby warm and sleeping by her side, our Anna lay alone in her cold bed, and the baby would have been chilled to death on her bosom. Why was the storm only for our old homestead, the sunshine for them?"

"Perhaps God will explain all this when we get to heaven," answered Mary, lifting her forehead in the gloomy light. "Come, uncle Nat—come in!"

With gentle violence the girl drew him into the house.

From that night Mary Fuller ceased to be a child. The story of a woman's wrongs had given her a woman's heart.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

LILLY FORESTER'S LAST BALL.

BY FANNIE MORETON.

"HERE, Alice! fasten those pearls, and clasp this bracelet. Quick, it has struck nine. Now give me my bouquet. One kiss, dear mother, and good-bye. Do not sit up for me, as Alice will let me in, and you need rest."

Her fairy step is heard tripping down the stairs. The mother's listening ear catches the sound of the closing door, and the carriage drives off, bearing her still dear, though erring child to scenes of revelry and mirth. And sinking on her knees, the mother's voice goes up in tones of heartfelt earnestness to Him who ever listens to the prayer of the broken-hearted.

"Watch over her when I am gone," she said, "may she not wander in forbidden paths, but prepare to meet me above. Oh, my daughter, my daughter, may God forgive you even as I do."

"Why, mamma, Lilly Forester is quite the belle to-night. Only see what a bevy of admirers have already collected around her. And with what queenly grace she receives the homage so freely offered at her shrine. But is it not strange, mamma, that Lillias is here to-night without a chaperone? For you know this is her first appearance in company since her father's death."

"Strange, Clara," said the proud, aristocratic woman thus addressed, "why it is more than strange. How Mrs. Forester can permit her daughter to go into society alone, as she does, is a problem I cannot solve. But," and a smile of contempt swept over her still handsome features, "if I mistake not she will have cause to regret it ere long."

"Why, mamma, what do you mean?"

"Anna! where are your eyes, that you do not see who is even now pouring those honied words of flattery into her, I fear, too willing ear?"

"Will Miss Anna do me the honor to dance the next quadrille with me?" said a gentleman, at that moment, coming up to where Anna

Wilmington and her mother were standing, and consequently breaking off the conversation.

Anna bowed, accepted the gentleman's hand, and was soon lost to sight in the mazes of the dance.

Yes! reader, Lilly Forester was guilty, guilty of leaving her weary, heart-sick mother at home, to come to such a scene as this: but guiltless of aught that would call forth the censures of the cold worldling who had pronounced against her. Bewildering was the sight—that ball-room. The soft light of the chandeliers reflected upon the fairy forms that mingled in the dance; the music playing in the intervals: all, all there was to intoxicate the sense. But many a pang of remorse shot across Lilly's bosom that evening, as she thought of her dear, suffering parent at home. And many a time did she wish herself once more there, encircled in that mother's arms: and when, at twelve o'clock, the carriage was announced, a joyful exclamation escaped her lips as she hastened to the dressing-room, and was soon at the door of her home.

"Why, Alice," she exclaimed, as the maid answered the summons, "how long you were. Has mamma——" But the face of the servant alarming her, she cried, "is anything the matter with mamma, Alice?" And rushing forward, she was at her mother's chamber door ere the affrighted domestic had time to interpose.

But who shall describe that scene? That pale, dead face; and the too late repentant, erring child.

"Oh, mother!" she bitterly exclaimed, as she knelt beside her, "speak one word, only one little word, to say that you forgive me, mother." But the unfettered spirit had winged its flight; and had gone to its home above where is no more sorrow, nor agony, nor death.

It was a deep lesson which Lilly Forester

learned that night; bitter in its acquirement, yet lasting in its benefits; and though Lilly is now the wife of a Senator, and has mingled much in the world, yet the impressions of that night have never left her. And even now, when she hears the young and thoughtless speak in joyous accents of an anticipated ball, she shudders lest some erring one will return to find an earthly parent bereft of life. For she thinks of her own LAST BALL.

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NANNIE AND I.

BY FRANK LEE.

HEIGH-HO! There was evidently something the matter!

Nannie sat at the top of the terraced steps which led from our rambling old country house into the garden, intently employed in the interesting task of analyzing a withered flower, and I sat at the bottom, making sad havoc among my mother's pet rose-trees, with the lash of my riding-whip.

The maiden did not raise her eyes, though she occasionally cast a side-long glance from under her long lashes and labyrinth of curls, and her lips pouted so kissably, like wild strawberries longing to be tasted, while the red stole into her cheeks as if seeking to rival their color. The youth at her feet, a slight—Lord bless me! I had quite forgotten I was writing about myself! Just fill up the blank to suit your own taste, my pretty lady, and in your own imaginative vein, which, you know, does not suit *me*.

Yes, even a blind man could have told there was something the matter—provided he could have seen Nannie's mouth—and as you are a particular friend, I don't mind confiding the secret to you.

There had been a gay party gathered that day within those walls, for my mother—good soul!—had a fancy for gathering a houseful of young people round her during the warm months, and since early morning the grounds had rung to the sounds of merry laughter and joyous voices. But they were all gone now, leaving Nannie and I alone—what we usually desired.

Nannie was my summer cousin—that is, the step-daughter of a distant relative of my father's—a very pleasant relationship indeed! One could steal kisses and breathe tender words, ramble on the river bank, gallop the horses over the hills, and nobody to shake their wise heads or utter invidious remarks. Ah, there's nothing so charming as to have a summer cousin—try it on my recommendation, and see if you don't have respect for my judgment ever after!

Among our guests that day was a beautiful Southerner on a visit to some friends whose country-seat was near ours, and as she was a stranger, it became incumbent on me to do the honors of "our poor mansion" with what grace I might—you'll know how much that is when

you make me a visit—I here give you a general invitation, and ask you to bring your sisters "into the bargain."

Heavens! what a lovely girl Genevieve Carroll was! Proud, impetuous, eyes bright as the stars that shone above her fair home, and a passionate nature, fervid as the sun which ripened the tropical fruits of her father's domain. An accomplished flirt was she withal, and I, not being averse to such a thing when a lady's eyes say—"I dare you"—it came to pass that before long we two were as deep in a flirtation as Airedale wished to bury the wandering seamen—how many fathoms was it? I can't tell, for I have a horror of arithmetical questions, they remind me of my *cane* and *Cain* days!

Nannie had been very gay too, lavishing her most fascinating smiles on a young lieutenant with a moustache like a Circassian's eyebrow. I know I turned more than once from my charming companion to watch that engaged couple, but Nannie couldn't see me, not she! and when that military pullet began to twang a guitar—"Dark eyed one, dark-eyed one, I languish for thee"—I moved impatiently away, feeling an unaccountable aversion to the moustached youth—I always did hate a man that played the guitar!

In spite of my gaiety, I think I have been happier than I was during that bright June day, and it was with a feeling of relief that I bounded up the avenue on my return from seeing Miss Carroll to the gate, and I believe I lost her sunbeam of a parting smile before I reached the terrace where Nannie sat. It was a long time before she condescended to notice me in the least, or pay the slightest attention to my numerous questions "of what ailed her?" But when she had finished dissecting that unfortunate rosebud, she said coolly in answer to my repeated interrogatories,

"It was compassion for you that caused me to be silent! The flow of your conversation has continued in such an unceasing stream all day that I supposed you must be tired."

"Am I ever too tired to talk with you?"

"La, cox, what a lack-a-daisical look!" said she, teasingly; "you are the very picture of a despairing swain."

I was vexed! I am not a vain person—at least

it is my privilege to believe so—and I trust my temper is no haster than other people's, but Nannie's rillery I never could stand.

She began to hum—

"Dark-eyed one, dark-eyed one, I languish for thee!"

"For heaven's sake don't bore me with that again," said I, peevishly; "that goose of a lieutenant sung it until I'm dead sick!"

"Ah, ha, sets the wind in that quarter?" returned she, jeeringly. "But don't call him a goose, cousin, he's a duck, a perfect duck!"

"Rather a lame duck," was my response.

"I vow your very eyes are turning green," said the inexorable Nannie, and she picked up the guitar which lay on the step beside her, and sang in her sweetest voice another sentimental ditty she had learned from the lieutenant—

"When stars are in the Summer sky,
Then most I pine for thee;
Bend on me then those tender eyes,
As stars look on the sea."

I pulled my cap violently down over my eyes, whistled my dog that lay sleeping on the lawn, then kicked him for coming, and strode away, Nannie's laughter ringing mockingly in my ear mingled with fragments of "I can but know thee as my star," &c.

I did not enter Miss Nannie's presence again that night, and before morning came had fully decided on the line of conduct I should pursue. I was no match for the mischievous damsel during the first moments of pique, but when time had been given me to grow a little cooler, I was fully her equal!

She poured me a dish of coffee with her own fair hands at breakfast next day, passing it with a winning smile, so I knew she had repented, and was eager to atone for her conduct—but I had not!

It had always been our habit to ride early in the morning, but I made no move toward ordering the horses, and with a look of reproach which might have moved a stone, Nannie sat down to an Italian lesson.

"Come here, coz," she called from the hall, as I sat in the breakfast-room over the morning paper, "and help me, for I can't understand this stupid Metastasio at all."

We had been accustomed to pore together over those charmed pages—the volume resting on the broad window-seat—my arm thrown lightly round Nannie's waist—one hand imprisoning hers, while with every movement of her graceful head a shower of bright ringlets swept my cheek, and sent a strange thrill through my frame—ah, believe me, I knew how to study Metastasio!

But on that particular morning I was in no mood to relish his honied measures, and far from being of the "*beate gente*," could better have sympathized with Dante and the souls

*"Che son contenti
Nel fuoco!"*

"I must beg you to excuse me," replied I, without taking the cigar from my mouth, "I am very busy, and consider old Metastasio a mere twaddler."

Nothing daunted by her defeat, Nannie assailed me in another quarter.

"I have almost forgotten that "*Polacca*" you taught me the other day, do show me again—I'm sadly stupid!"

I didn't contradict her assertion, and she came and leaned over my chair courageously, while the cigar smoke encircled her head like a mist-wreath.

"So have I forgotten it," was my answer, "but I've learned something new—the words are great favorites with you."

She slid her pretty arm with its short muslin sleeve through mine and drew me into the music-room, her face bent toward me just as if she wouldn't be very angry should I try to kiss her. But I had by no means relented, and seating myself at the piano, began a simple prelude, then suddenly burst out with—

"When stars are in the quiet sky."

"That horrid thing!" exclaimed Nannie, before I had finished the first verse; "don't sing it—it's positively sickening."

"I thought you liked it," replied I, innocently, "I learned it on purpose to please you," and I sang it through.

"It sounds better than when that goose of a lieutenant sang it," whispered she.

"'Duck,' Nannie, 'a perfect duck!'"

And Nannie laid her head confidently on my shoulder, while the long curls kissed my cheek, longing to have me say I forgave her—but I didn't; I quietly retreated from her caress, and crossed the room to the bell-pull.

"Tell James to bring my horse," I said to the servant who obeyed my summons.

"Oh, you dear creature!" exclaimed Nannie, fairly clapping her hands with delight. She thought I meant it as a sign of reconciliation—deluded Nannie, she was never more mistaken in her life! "I have wanted a ride all the morning, but thought you were cross, and so did not mention it."

"Cross, Nan, why should I be?"

"Oh, because—because—you know!" and there she broke down.

"No I don't."

"That I acted silly about that dunce of a lieutenant, but I only wished to punish you for deserting me all day for Miss Carrol," and Nannie was close to me again, my arm about her waist.

"Was that all?" I asked.

"All, you unbelieving thing! Wasn't I foolish?" and she put up her lips to be kissed.

"Rather foolish, Nannie!" and as she bounded through the hall up stairs, I added mentally, "in more ways than one." Her confession only made me the more desirous to humble her—you needn't be shocked, I never laid claims to perfection, and the native Adam is pretty strong within.

In a few moments down came Nannie in her cap and riding-skirt, looking prettier than a wood-nymph, and joined me as I stood in the outer door watching the groom bring up my mare.

"Why, the stupid fellow has only brought one horse," said Nan, "what does that mean?"

I turned toward her with a look of innocent wonder. "Did you think of riding this morning? I heard you say it was a fine day for a gallop, but thought you expected the lieutenant. Good morning—I'm going to call on Miss Carrol—shall I present *vos compliments*? Sorry you wouldn't ride with me—don't wait luncheon. Gene—Miss Carrol, I mean, was anxious to visit Prospect Rock—I shall accompany her! *Au revoir*, pray keep me in remembrance till we meet again."

Nannie did not stir while I rattled off that heartless tirade, nor utter a word after I had finished and mounted my horse, waving her a kiss. She looked at me a moment in perfect silence, then gathering up her riding-skirt swept into the house, and I rode away. Before I was down the avenue my heart relented, but pride would not allow me to return, so I rode over to Rose Heath and spent the morning with the fair Southerner—but I believe she thought the preceding day's dissipation had made me dull! I did not return home until almost dinner time, and before I was dressed the family were seated at table. Nannie did not look up as I entered, but I took pains to elevate my voice so that she might have the full benefit of the speech, when in answer to some inquiry of my mother's I said, "I have had a delightful day! Do you know, *petite maman*, I am almost tempted to spend next winter South?"

I glanced at Nannie, her beautiful lips quivered slightly, but she betrayed no other sign of emotion, and went on with her dish of strawberries. She left the room immediately after on some

slight pretext, and I did not see her again that night—her maid said she had a severe headache and did not wish to be disturbed.

I do not know what evil spirit took possession of me, but I determined to spare her no pain, but punish her to the full extent of my power. The Rose Heath party were going to leave the valley in a few days to make a tour of the watering-places and lakes, and thence south to spend the winter with Miss Carrol in New Orleans, and I announced to my mother my determination to accompany them.

"But Nannie and I can't be ready to start when they do!" she said, supposing they were to go with me.

"I beg pardon! Did you think of going, ma'am? I thought you detested travelling."

"But on Nannie's account, for you know she is to stay with us a year."

"Don't be uneasy for her! I am confident she has other plans."

Dear, quiet mamma was easily satisfied, and went away to give orders for preparatory arrangements concerning my sudden departure.

Nannie went to spend the next day with a friend, and I did not see her before she left—the day after I was to start. When she returned in the evening, the lieutenant accompanied her, and she greeted me with a careless kindness very different from her usual manner.

My mother spoke of my intended journey.

"Did you know he was going, Nannie!"

"No, ma'am," replied she, gaily, without turning from the lieutenant, whose head was evidently turned. "I doubt whether he could tear himself from our 'goodlie companie.'"

"You have great confidence in your powers of attraction," replied I, coldly, "I trust you may always be as fortunate."

Nannie did not think I would go—she supposed I was only desirous of trying my power over her, and would at the last moment relent, although I think she would have opposed my departure had it not been for the wound I had given her pride.

Nannie had several callers when I was ready to start in the morning, and she only turned from them to say,

"And you are really going? I don't believe it yet."

Had it not been for that remark I think I should have relented—it altered the whole of my destiny!

I went away from that quiet haunt, but I have sometimes thought that I left my heart behind. I went out into the gay world—there were many to flatter, many to praise, but I found very

few to love. I made the anticipated tour with my acquaintances—flirted with Miss Carrol—weighed her charms in a diamond scale with a certain fair head I knew of—and up flew the heiress' end. I grew tired of the dissipation and frivolity of a Frenchified Southern city—I grew weary of myself, and my old longing for change beset me.

I never wrote to Nannie—a mistaken feeling of pride withheld me! I alluded to her but once in my letters. My mother wrote that she was with them in New York, very gay and a great belle. My soul was filled with bitterness when I read those lines, and I answered them harshly, well aware they would meet her eye for whom they were intended, for Nannie was always letter reader to mamma.

"Gay and a belle you say Nannie is? My pretty summer cousin must be enjoying her season of freedom! Let her take advantage of her fresh sounding ring which attracts so much attention to secure a ring of another kind—she is meant for a holiday existence. I would advise her to marry old Durham Potts, the ex-tallow chandler, who counts moments by gold pieces—he would idolize her, and probably soon melt himself out of the world, and drop into his coffin as he used to pour his grease into a candle mould. Widow's weeds are bewitching things, particularly when there is not a widow's heart under them."

Miss Carrol and I parted soon after. We did not quarrel, but I think we were mutually weary of the light chains woven on a summer day. I left her to console herself with a new lover, while I made a tour through Mexico and California.

How I longed to hear from Nannie, but would not write! My wayward heart had counted up its jewels and found her image its most precious treasure. I learned to know that I loved her—not idly—not with the passing adoration I had felt for others—but with that love which makes or mars a life not for time only, but eternity. During my wanderings through the joyous South and the romance-land of Mexico, amid the excitement of change, new friends, a wild, reckless existence, I ever found my thoughts returning to that summer haunt on the Susquehanna, and the beautiful summer cousin I had left behind. I grew more restless ever—I fretted like a caged bird—and was in the mood when I should have grown tired of heaven in a week, and plunged into hell to vary the monotony. Reader, do you ever have such moods? If so I pity you, for they come of a partial insanity worse than entire madness. During such moments have I heedlessly crushed the brightest flowers in my pathway—

blotted out the sunlight from my own sky—alienated the affections of those who loved—and made myself that which I am.

But heaven preserve us, I am growing sentimental, and that is all out of date! Authors now-a-days are like comic actors—paid for being amusing—and what right have they to throw off the fool's cap and bells?

The next June found me at home in dear Wyoming. I arrived a year from the day I started on my mad journey, according to my plan. I think I was more nearly happy when I found myself at the railway station a few miles from ———, than ever before. Utterly petrified must this bosom become ere it refuse to quicken its pulsations at the remembrance of that valley haunt I shall behold never again.

It was evening when my carriage passed through the iron gates of our domain, and rolled swiftly up the broad avenue. I sprang hurriedly out when it reached the entrance, and stole into the house intending to surprise them, but my mother was absent. I was not expected, the housekeeper said.

"Is Miss Nannie here?"

"Miss Nannie? Oh—yes!" I waited to hear no more, though she was about to speak, but bounded out of the side door into the garden. By a fountain that cast up its glittering waters with a murmuring sound I saw the waving of woman's garments—from that distance I recognized Nannie.

I sprang toward her, and before she could move clasped her in my arms. I thought she was going to faint she grew so pale, but my mad kisses brought back her color. She pushed me gently away with a few broken expressions of surprise. I knelt at her feet, and there in the June moonlight told her all—my love—my jealousy—my remorse.

She did not interrupt me—did not stir—her hand lay in mine pulseless as a fragment of marble, though I marked the hue of her cheek alter. When I paused, she drew her hand away, and rose slowly from her seat.

"*Il vent trop tard*—you remember the rest, beau cousin," she said, while I listened breathlessly. "I am much obliged for your good opinion, but my summer friend, I have acted on your *very* kind suggestion," and she looked steadily at me, "I was married to 'old Durham Potts' a fortnight since."

She gathered her shawl about her, playfully flung her flowers on my forehead and went away. As I lay powerless among the dew-soaked blossoms I heard her merry laugh, and rough tones in response, which I recognised only too well as

those of the ex-tallow chandler—may I be spotted if it wasn't old Potts!

Reader, I have written in a lightsome strain, but there has been a jar along my spirit's chords all the while Nannie has been Mrs. Durham Potts—no matter how long, I keep no count of time! I have never seen her since that night; and as the carriage which conveyed me there took me

immediately away, the old housekeeper was convinced she had seen a ghost, for Nannie kept her own counsel, and no one else saw me. What do you think her silence portends?—does the candle moulder hold those wild pulses in a leash?—does that proud heart nestle quietly in his keeping?

I leave my native land to-morrow for years—when the Arctic sails give a sigh to my memory! Farewell.

LITTLE THINGS.

BY MISS ALICE GRAY.

THE coral insect that forms the banan-waving, fire-nursing islands of the Pacific is a little thing. So is the worm that lurking within the timbers of a mighty ship, eats out the heart of it, and sends it from its native element. World-extending, all-pervading is the empire of little things. Let us see "how great a matter a little fire kindleth" in New York.

"Ma," said Miss Amelia Thorne, "we must give a party. We have had so many invitations this winter that really it looks shabby not to return some of them."

The young lady was lounging over a late breakfast, while her mother, who had finished an hour before, was running over the grocer's bill. Looking up from that, she answered, "Well, my dear, I suppose we ought. But you must ask your father about it. Butter—two-and-sixpence a pound."

"I hate to go to pa. He always talks about my breaking him. If he's going to give me the money at all, he might do it without lecturing me. It's really very disagreeable."

"Eggs—three for a shilling. Terrible."

"Which, ma? the eggs or the lecturing?"

"The eggs, Amelia dear—they only give three for a shilling."

"Oh! do, ma, let the eggs go. I don't care how much they cost. I'm talking to you about giving a party."

"I told you, Amelia, you must ask your father's consent. He was very cross about paying for my last new carriage—that little beauty, you know. And your milliners' bills, Amelia, you really must bring them down."

"Ah, well, never mind now. We must give a party, and when we are doing the thing, may as well do it properly. I'll tease pa to-night."

In blessed unconsciousness of what was in store for him, Mr. Thorne, endeavoring if possible to divest his shoulders of the counting-house stoop, ascended the steps of his splendid house within fashionable distance of Union Square. Miss Amelia's face, as she ran into the parlor to receive him, wore a sweet smile, such as she seldom called up except for her beaux. Soft as the little hand she laid upon his shoulder was the voice in which she asked him if he was tired, and if she could get him anything. After dinner

she brought him all the newspapers, and drew down the French water-slide chandelier so as to suit him exactly; and then placing herself at his side, asked him if he would grant her a request. Mr. Thorne raised the jeweled hand of his pretty daughter to his lips, but warned by past experience, said he must hear it first. As he listened, he drew his brows, and fidgetted in his chair.

"And how much do you suppose this party will cost?" said he.

"I'm sure, I can't tell for certain."

"More than I can afford, that's certain."

"Oh, but, pa, ma wishes it too."

"I see, I see. I believe you and your mother think I'm made of money. Do you suppose I drudge all day in my counting-room just to have you dash round up-town here, tricked out in every new French folly, the envy of Fifth Avenue; or to throw away thousands of dollars in providing music and flowers and waiters and an elegant supper, forsooth, for a parcel of silly popinjays who don't care a snap for you nor you for them, and who haven't sense enough to make a cent of money for themselves!"

"Ah, now, dear papa——"

"Oh! well, well. You must have it, I suppose. Take your own way. Be as moderate as you can, though."

The next day, after Mrs. Thorne had returned from the meeting of a charitable society of which she was First Directress—Mrs. Thorne prided herself upon her talent for managing—Miss Amelia came to her with a paper and pencil to make out the list for the party, and truly their acquaintance would have been wiser if they had heard their remarks upon them. The Seymours, though they scarcely knew them, were to be invited because they gave very handsome parties themselves. The Talcotts names were crossed out because "nobody knew them and they looked so dowdy." "I won't have the Stones," said Amelia, "because one will be sure to have on her everlasting blue dress; and old Mrs. Dean, no one wants her—her eyes are all over—she watches one so."

The names of a great many young ladies were put down merely because they had handsome and agreeable brothers, and a number rejected because they never gave parties themselves.

"Will you invite the Owens, ma?" asked Miss Amelia.

"No, I will not invite the Owens. I don't want anything to do with them. Mrs. Owen is always trying to fasten her acquaintance on me, and I never will give her any encouragement."

"But they have been very polite, ma. You know when James was sick they sent round jellies and creams so often, and one of the girls showed me all about that toilet-cover I embroidered."

"I can't help it, Amelia. They don't know any one who will be here. I will not invite them."

Mr. Thorne had told Amelia to be moderate, and her mother said she shouldn't have a new dress for the occasion, so she contented herself by going down to Stewart's to get Brussel lace at ten dollars a yard to flounce her pink silk. Pink and black were such a pretty contrast, she said, and she always loved three flounces of foot-deep lace.

"Bill, are your sisters going to the Thorne's party?" said a young man to William Owen.

"Don't know. I haven't heard them say anything about it."

"Going to be a grand smash there. Something quite *recherchee*, as the ladies say."

When William Owen went home at night, almost his first words were, "mother, have you and the girls received invitations to Mrs. Thorne's party?"

"No; is she going to give one?"

"Yes; on Thursday night. A very large one."

"It's very rude of Mrs. Thorne not to ask us," said Charlotte Owen, laying down her crochet-needle.

"Just like some of Amelia's airs," said Fanny.

"I've been so polite to them that I wonder they can do such a thing," said Mrs. Owen. "But that's all the thanks one ever gets."

It is vain to attempt to describe a New York party within the limits of Japonicadom. Moustached German barons and French counts were there—some Hungarian adventurer trying to throw into his manner some air of Kossuth—a sparing mixture of literary celebrities, not more than one or two, mustn't risk spoiling the stylish air of the party—ladies who carried on their persons far more than their husbands were really worth, if their accounts were settled and debts paid—an array of lovely girls such as only New York can boast—flippant youths who aspire to marry the fortunes that old men grasped so tightly—soul-ravishing music—costly flowers—lights—paintings—statuary—all were grouped together. And two or three mornings after, the bills for the inanimate desirabilities were pre-

sented to Mr. Thorne just before he went to his store. Stop! for the last year we never hear of people going to their "store"—they go to their "place of business."

About a week after the party, before the Owens had ceased to curl their lips at the mention of Mrs. Thorne's name, Mr. Carter, in whose store William Owen was confidential clerk, went up to the desk where the young man was writing, and showed him a note of Mr. Thorne's for a large amount. Owen thought of Mrs. Thorne's gratuitous affront to his family. I really don't know about that," said he.

Mr. Carter was a quiet, easy man, who knew very little about business, and left everything to his head clerk. Surprised at this, he answered, "You don't think it doubtful! It's Mr. Thorne—Daniel Thorne."

"I wouldn't say doubtful, exactly. But I think I wouldn't have it."

"Oh, well, it's all the same to me. I'll tell French I won't take it."

"What?" said the man, when Mr. Carter declined Mr. Thorne's note. "It's Mr. Thorne, in South street. This is as good as gold."

"Maybe so, but I'd rather not have it."

Mr. French went away filled with astonishment at Mr. Carter's folly, but after a while began to think that if that merchant didn't like the note, perhaps he had better get rid of it himself.

"Why," said one of the men to whom he offered it at a discount, "what do you want to dispose of this for? Mr. Thorne does a very large business."

"Perhaps it is too large," said Mr. French.

In the course of the day whispers about Mr. Thorne's stability had circulated among many of the merchants.

"I'll be careful how I trust him," said one, "a note of his was refused this morning."

"Indeed. We'd better take care then. I'm afraid he's going too fast."

So it went on, till in a few days Mrs. Thorne found that an unusual caution was exercised toward him. His credit, formerly unlimited, seemed strangely narrowed down. His affairs, so far as he knew, were as prosperous as ever, but his business being extended and full of risk, without credit it was impossible to carry it on. He promptly met all demands upon him, and by continuing all things the same as ever, and preserving an unruffled countenance, tried to restate himself in his former position. But the deficiency of his credit embarrassed his operations; and then, his mind anxious and harassed, he made two or three rash and unfortunate ventures, which lessened his credit still more.

The stone which a child's hand has started from the brow of the hill gathers force by its own descent. In a few weeks he found it very hard to keep the care-wrinkles off his forehead, and meet his fellow merchants with the same assured glance. If he had had anything real or tangible to combat, he would have known how to meet it. But he could not understand the vague rumors about him—rumors that had so lately been falsehoods, but were now fast making themselves into realities. He hinted something of his perplexities to his wife, but she only ordered her carriage down to Beck's to look at some new spring silks, saying to herself, "Mr. Thorne always was nervous."

Many were the mornings—the bright, breezy spring mornings when his wife and daughter were driving gaily through the palace-lined streets which are the pride of New York, that the merchant sat, anxious and dejected, in his dull, dingy counting-room.

One day, weary and sick, he went home early, and his wife on returning from her round of calls, was surprised to find him sitting in his own bed-room, his face wearing a troubled and gloomy expression such as she had never seen before.

"What on earth is the matter?" she exclaimed.

"Have you forgotten what I told you some weeks ago, Margaret?"

"No; but is there anything new?"

"Nothing but the confirmation of what I then feared. I told you then that if my credit was lost, all was lost. And it's nearly gone now."

"Well! what must we do?" said Mrs. Thorne, after a pause, "sell this house and furniture and carriage and horses, and begin to economize as much as possible?"

"No, no, that would bring the blow at once. There must be no difference in outward appearances. We will keep on. I'll go and see my broker again to-morrow. The tide may turn."

On went the whirl of the great city; and the whirl of the half million of human hearts that animate it. The crash came at last. Mr. Thorne failed one morning for a million and a half.

A fortnight after, the red flag was flying from one of the windows of the splendid mansion in Eighteenth street, and a busy crowd was prying into every corner and closet, and fingering the beautiful and costly furniture. The morning papers had blazed with advertisements. Every thing was sold without reserve. Mr. Thorne made a compromise with his creditors, and moved away into the country; and Mrs. Thorne had the satisfaction, whenever the subject was mentioned, of almost boasting of what an amount her husband had failed for.

The effects of that sudden crash were long felt, and widely diffused through all classes of the community. But who of all those who experienced them could look back to the cause? Mrs. Thorne's refusing to send the Owens a card for her party. Even young William Owen himself had no idea that it was his hand that had set the ball a rolling. Truly it was a little thing. Said we not that little things are powerful—and nowhere more so than in New York!

FANNY'S COSMETIC.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

"WHAT a lovely girl Miss Comstock is," said Fred Montagne to his chum, the morning after a pic-nic at Roseville. "Positively, Harry, she is the belle of the place."

Fred was a young lawyer from the city, handsome, rich, accomplished, and accustomed to the best society, who had come up to Roseville to spend a few weeks with his friends.

Harry laughed, as he replied, "Our established belles, Miss Irwin and Patty Jones, would toss their heads in scorn, if they heard you placing Fanny Comstock above them. Why, Fred, she's but a 'school marm,' as they call it here, while they are young ladies, *par excellence*, that is they have never done a day's work of any kind in their lives."

"For all that," answered Fred, "she is the prettiest of the party. To tell the truth, Harry, I can scarcely get her image out of my mind. What a complexion she has."

"A complexion!" replied Harry, with mock surprise. "Do you call hers a complexion? My dear fellow, you must be demented, for she never used pearl-powder, much less painted, in her whole life; and that a lady can have a complexion, without using such things, is contradictory to the fashionable orthodoxy of Roseville. Our two belles consider cosmetics as necessary to beauty as oxygen is to animated life. You, as coming from the metropolis, might be tolerated in the heresy of opposing pearl-powder; but if I, a mere native here, was to utter such an absurdity, I'd be set down as an ignorant savage at once."

Harry spoke in this bantering tone, because he knew that Fred was above the fashionable follies of the day, and despised, as much as he did himself, the use of cosmetics by the sex. Fred's words, as he answered, realized all this.

"I tell you what, Harry," he said, "if there's anything that lowers a young lady in my opinion, it is the habit of powdering and painting. It argues such an excessive desire for admiration that it disgusts me at once. Think of a wife, coming down as yellow as a Malay to breakfast, when, at the ball the night before, she looked, with her pearl-powder, as fair as an angel! Such things take all the romance out of love. The woman, who will resort to cosmetics, must be,

more or less, of a hypocrite: for surely, if she will deceive in this matter, she will in things of greater importance. Nothing repels men of sense sooner than the practice, among our fashionable belles, of substituting artificial, for natural, charms. I believe, conscientiously, it has more to do with the bachelorship of educated men, in our great cities, than the ladies suspect. One can't find anything real, any more, in town; everything is false and hollow; and yet, when one comes out into the country, it don't seem much better. Miss Comstock is positively the only natural young lady I've seen."

"Fanny's only cosmetics are exercise, fresh air, and pure water," answered Harry. "She's as talented, too, as she is bright-complexioned, and as amiable as she is talented. But it won't do for me to talk of her, or I shall fall in love myself; and as I'm as poor as a church mouse that won't do:—my profession must be my mistress for many a long year yet."

"In simple truth, Harry," replied Fred, "I shall not quarrel with your poverty, for I don't want such a rival as you would make. Miss Comstock wouldn't look at a stranger like me, if an old friend such as you was to enter the list."

Harry looked at Fred slyly as he answered, "Don't believe it, my dear fellow. If I can trust my eyes, Fanny half lost her heart, yesterday, when you were expatiating so eloquently on the social wrongs of the British operatives, such as you had witnessed for yourself: and, without flattery, Fred, you described the poor colliers, in their underground dens, in terms almost to bring tears. By-the-bye, too, Fanny is the only one of the party, who was ignorant how rich you are. You must know that she is as proud as she is poor, and will hardly speak to a young fellow with a fortune, lest he, or others, might think she was after his wealth. So I told her, jocularly, not to confound you with your rich cousin, the millionaire Montagne: and it had the effect I intended; for she evidently thought you were a poor drudge of a lawyer like myself."

Fred slightly frowned. He did not like deceit of any kind, and had no faith in the doctrine, "that the end justifies the means."

Here the conversation ceased. But its results did not. What Harry had said in favor of

Fanny heightened the admiration, which Fred had already conceived for the artless girl; and this liking, before our hero had been a month in Roseville, grew into a profound love. The established belles of the place made incessant attempts to estrange him from Fanny's side. Now they spoke slightly of her, because she taught school; now they ridiculed her plainness of dress; and now they fabricated falsehoods that would have tended to her disadvantage, if the tales had not carried their own refutation on their face.

But this envy and malice was in vain. The gossip of her jealous and unprincipled rivals cost Fanny, indeed, many a secret tear; but the faith of her lover in her was not shaken: and the arts of her enemies only recoiled on themselves.

Harry's prophecy proved correct, though Fred, with the diffidence of real merit, doubted to the last. But nature had constituted Fanny and our hero for each other. She loved Fred from the first. In his nobility of soul her own inner consciousness found its counterpart; and when, at last, tremulous with agitation, he asked her

hand, she answered without coquetry or affectation.

What a commotion the village was in, when it was reported that Fanny, after all, had carried off the prize. Never was the old church so crowded as on the day of the wedding, which took place, at Fred's urgent request, as soon as Fanny's term at the school was over. Harry accompanied the happy couple to Niagara, as groomsman, the bride's-maid being Fred's sister, to whom, we may add here, he was married a couple of years later, and who brought him a handsome fortune.

On Harry's return, he was beset, on every side, for a description of the splendid mansion, with its furniture and pictures, to which Fred had carried his bride. He was nothing loath to expatiate on it, for it gave him an opportunity to enjoy the mortification of Miss Irwin, and the other belles of the place.

"It was all owing to Mrs. Montagne keeping to her natural charms," he said, maliciously. "If you want to catch a man of sense, girls, you must use FANNY'S COSMETIC."

THE CARELESS MOTHER.

BY JANE WEAVER.

"I WONDER if Mrs. Sanders knows how that servant treats her child?" said Mrs. Curran, as she sat at her parlor window one day, directing, as she spoke, the attention of her sister to a nursery maid, who was occupying a window opposite. The sash was wide up, and though the bleak March wind blew directly in, the maid held a young infant in her arms. "I am sometimes tempted to tell Mrs. Sanders of the girl's carelessness, for the idle thing sits there, with that poor child, every time the mother goes out. But we don't visit, and Mrs. Sanders might think I was interfering."

In great cities, as many readers doubtless are aware, ladies often live opposite to each other, for years, without being acquainted.

"I wouldn't have anything to do with it," replied Mrs. Curran's sister, who was a good type of the selfish, prudent lady, "it's Mrs. Sanders' business to see that she has a good servant; and besides she might think you were unjust to the girl:—I never knew any good to come of playing the good Samaritan in matters of this kind."

"Perhaps you're right," answered Mrs. Curran, only half convinced, "but it makes my heart ache to see the poor little thing. It's never clothed sufficiently warm, and, when the window is up, it looks blue with cold."

"It's a first child," replied the sister, sententiously, going on with her crocheting, "when Mrs. Sanders has half a dozen, she'll know better."

"A great, strong Irish girl," indignantly cried Mrs. Curran, "to sit there unconcernedly, as if the dear, poor babe could resist cold as well as herself."

"Softly, softly, Mrs. Impetuous," said the humored sister, "Mrs. Sanders can't be so blind as not to know the real state of the case; and, in that event, she would consider your interference as an imputation on her as a mother."

Much more was said, but Mrs. Curran's benevolent purpose was over-ruled, principally, it must be confessed, on the plea last advanced.

Injustice, however, was done, by that plea, to Mrs. Sanders. She was young and inexperienced; had robust health herself; believed her nursery maid to be prudent, because the girl

had come well recommended; and had remained ignorant of the exposure of her infant, because, though a dozen neighbors had seen the servant's criminal folly, no one cared to assume the responsibility of interfering.

No mother could have loved her child better than Mrs. Sanders. To the extent of her knowledge, she did all she could to rear it healthfully; and if the babe was sick for even half a day, would not let it go out of her arms. But, when the child seemed well, she was accustomed, for an hour or two daily, to walk out for exercise and fresh air: a commendable habit, and one indirectly beneficial to the infant, but which, as we have seen, led to the exposure of the babe to the chilliest winds of March.

The fault was, therefore, not in a want of love, nor in leaving the infant to seek necessary exercise for herself, but in believing too implicitly in the recommendations her servant had received as a prudent nurse.

A day or two subsequent to the conversation we have recorded, a physician's carriage stopped at the door of Mrs. Sanders. There was neither servant, nor infant at the window that afternoon, nor had the mother been seen to go out.

"I'm afraid Mrs. Sanders' baby is sick," said Mrs. Curran. "It's the time it's at the window with its nurse."

"Likely enough," retorted her sister. "Such exposure would make most of us sick."

"How I wish I knew the mother," answered the kind-hearted Mrs. Curran. "Poor thing! I remember how I suffered, when my first child was ill, and she's just as inexperienced, I've no doubt, as I was then."

The next day, when Mrs. Curran went to her chamber window, after dressing, she saw the opposite house closed, and a bit of crape, tied with ribbon, hung to the door-bell. The child, as she learned on inquiry, had died in the night, from an attack of croup.

"Oh! if I had only warned the poor mother in time," she said, bitterly.

The almost heart-broken mother heard the truth respecting her servant, when it was too late.

"Oh! if I had been more careful," she cried, in anguish, "and seen for myself that the nurse

was trustworthy. But now, no care can give me
baby again. No, never, never!"

Thus both reproached themselves, and both
careless mother, or an over prudent neighbor?

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EMILY LAWRENCE.

BY MRS. MADELINE LESLIE.

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 329.

CHAPTER V.

IN a deep, loathsome dungeon in the north of Spain sat, or rather lay, a mother by the side of her dying child. But at this time she thought not of the dungeon. It was a place of light, almost of joy to her; for she had that day been restored to her beloved child.

Many months had elapsed since she had looked upon the face of the loved one. But now she could minister to her wants; and she felt happy. For this she had prayed, until her prayers were answered; though, whether in mercy to her, or that the lingering death of her child might be a yet greater punishment, I will not here attempt to say. She had learned by sad experience the truth of inspiration, "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruelty." But her prayers had been registered above, and her heavenly Father, though he lingered long, had not forgotten her—no, not one cry from her agonized heart; He had already begun to work for her deliverance, He had created an intense interest for her in the heart of one of the "Sisters of Charity," who had resolved to effect her escape, or die in the attempt. She well knew that death by dreadful tortures would be her fate, if she should be discovered in comforting and releasing a detested heretic. But the grace of God had touched her heart; her eyes had been opened to the wickedness of the "man of sin," by the patience and submission exhibited in the life and conversation of the prisoners placed under her care.

Emily Ellingwood, for it was no other than she, had confided to her sympathizing friend all the prominent events of her life. It was fortunate for Emily that she could speak Spanish fluently, else she might not have been able to reach the heart of one, who, from entertaining the strongest prejudices against her, had been converted into a true Christian friend.

But three times during the long, long period of her imprisonment had Emily seen the face of any other human being; and that was the face of a monk, who came to see if she was prepared to renounce her errors and to embrace the Romish faith.

When she with her daughter narrowly escaped the fate of Mr. Lenox, who was shot through the heart, they were bound and carried to a vessel belonging to the government, a vessel prepared to receive prisoners and to convey them to Spain. Here the afflicted woman soon found her captors were entirely indifferent to her supposed offence at conniving at the plot of the insurgents; but their indifference was soon converted into deadly hate, as they ascertained that she was a heretic. They treated her with every indignity, and upon her arrival in Spain delivered her at once to the "fathers of the inquisition." Here she had remained separated from her daughter, whom the priest hoped to win over to the true church.

Alice was treated with far less severity than her mother, but would infinitely have preferred sharing all her mother's hardships, could she have enjoyed her society. She was now near her end and had been removed to her mother's dungeon, upon the representation of sister Isa to the "holy fathers," that she thought the presence and death of Alice would serve to convert her mother to the true faith. By this *she* meant faith in Christ alone; but *they* not dreaming it to be possible that she had imbibed heretical sentiments, had understood her to mean the true Catholic Church.

I cannot—I will not attempt to describe the feelings of Emily, as suddenly starting from sleep she gazed by the dim taper into the face of her daughter to ascertain if she still lived. Alas! the vital spark had fled. The marble brow upon which the hand of the mother was quickly placed, told too truly the tale of death. Alice was safe from her captivity and rejoicing before the throne of God.

Exhausted with many days and nights of watching, with the want of nourishing food, Emily had fallen into a heavy sleep, during which the angel of death, whom no bolts or bars can keep out, had entered the low dungeon and borne the ransomed soul away to its home in the sky. Emily wept not; she hoped soon to follow her; she rejoiced; yes, she rejoiced with joy unspeakable, that her beloved child had not accepted her deliverance by renouncing her Saviour. Now

she was with Him and would be with Him forever. But it was a joy of which the world in which she lived knew not. They could feel nothing of the peace which filled her soul, as she seemed sitting at the gate of heaven.

A pallet of straw, a jug, and an iron vessel were the only furniture of the low cell; but to her it seemed like a Paradise, because she felt it to be full of the presence of her God. Now she had received an answer to her prayers. The gracious Saviour had fulfilled his promise, "those that thou gavest me I have kept," and had taken the redeemed one to himself, that she might forever behold his glory.

When Isa conveyed the intelligence of the death of Alice, the fathers exhorted her to be faithful to the soul of the remaining captive, for her turn would soon come.

In the most solemn manner she assured them she would be faithful to her even unto death; when commending her zeal they waved her away; but sister Isa still lingered. She told them that the dampness of the dungeon in which the English woman was confined affected her own health; and that she feared on that account she had not been faithful as she ought. She requested as a favor to herself, that the prisoner might be removed to the cell formerly occupied by her daughter.

Hastily granting her request, they gave her liberty to do with the heretic as she would, only not to trouble them with her, as they had more important business than the conversion of one poor outcast.

This, sister Isa knew to be the most hopeful feature of the case. The formation of a new society, similar to the society of Jesus, occupied all their thoughts and rendered them far less vigilant and vindictive than they would otherwise have been. Within her recollection their had never been a time more fortunate for her plans than the present. She now turned the cunning, which she had been taught was right in promoting the good cause, to great account. One important step had been taken, Emily had been removed by the consent of the fathers from a dungeon out of which it would have been impossible for her to escape. Sister Isa bent all her energies to the devise of a plan for her deliverance.

This was no easy task. Surrounded every where by the spies of the Inquisitors, she hardly dared to think aloud, for fear the fact of her having in heart renounced Romanism should be even suspected. Her only hope under God grew out of the facts that the minds of the holy fathers and bishops were turned in another direc-

tion, and that they had great confidence in her zeal for the church. Many hours did she spend with Emily in prayer to God for their success. Mrs. Ellingwood lived a new life. Hope had once more entered her soul; hope of being released from the slimy walls of the dungeon; of breathing again the pure air; of seeing the glorious light of day; but more, far more than all else, of returning to the beloved ones whom she had not expected to behold until the morning of the resurrection. She knew not that her mother had gone to her everlasting home. In her long years of thought, thought, nothing but thought, when memory called back every scene through which she had passed, it was strange that imagination had not pictured to her changes which might have taken place in the home circle. No, not once had she even dreamed that another beloved one might be occupying her seat by the home fireside, her place in the heart of her husband.

At length, sister Isa announced that her arrangements were completed. She had nearly given up all hope of success; every plan had been frustrated, when suddenly a new thought occurred to her. A sacred relict was to be exposed for worship in a town near the court of Spain. She went immediately and asked leave for herself and sister Agnes to be present on the great occasion.

Consent was easily obtained upon her promising to procure some one to whom she could safely confide her charge. Success seemed almost certain. Sister Agnes was sick, and knew not of the use made of her name. She was a bigoted Catholic, and would have died rather than have afforded any aid in such a cause.

Sister Isa had obtained the use of her cloak and hood, which was the dress usually worn by the Sisters of Charity. This she had conveyed to the cell where Emily was confined. She had also provided wine, food, and money to take with them. It was their intention to leave in the morning, and proceed at once to the residence of the English consul, and put themselves under his protection and aid.

This, Isa thought, would take them two days; and unless Agnes should recover more rapidly than she expected, and thus fall in with those who would suppose her absent, she thought nothing would be suspected. Very early on the following morning, the good sister hastened to the cell of the prisoner. She made a powerful effort to control her emotion for fear she might betray herself. She was about to leave the only home she had ever known; and to leave it forever. She had determined to follow Emily to England.

With a pale face, but a firm heart, for she had well counted the cost, she bid the poor prisoner array herself quickly; then giving her a portion of cordial they went out of the cell, sister Isa locking the door as usual and putting the key in her pocket.

With stealthy footsteps they passed through one dark passage and then another, firmly grasping each other by the hand, and trying to still the beating of their own hearts lest they should be heard by others; when suddenly a firm step was heard approaching.

Sister Isa, who knew every stone in the building, quickly pushed Emily behind a large pillar, and retreating as far as possible into the shade, hoped to escape observation. How great then was her joy when the steps passed on; and they were not discovered.

With her heart throbbing with gratitude to God, the good sister was about to leave her hiding-place and raise the trap-door, when she perceived that Emily had fainted.

For a moment she gave up all for lost, but applying the cordial once more to Emily's lips, and chafing her hands, she soon had the satisfaction of seeing her revive. Ten minutes more and they were outside the walls, where the liberated captive would fain have fallen on her knees and given thanks to God; but her kind friend hurried her on. She had not proceeded many rods, however, when a new difficulty arose. Emily, cramped and enfeebled by her long confinement, could walk no further, and sank to the ground. But this time they were not long left in doubt. A market man rode by, and looking wishfully at them, recognized, as he thought, the sisters Agnes and Isa.

"Abroad early this morning," he said, pleasantly, as he rode slowly on.

In as careless a manner as she could assume, Isa asked where he was going, and found to her great joy that he would take them nearly half the distance they were expecting to go that day.

"Sister Agnes was too sick to come at all," said she, in reply to his inquiring look at her; "but we had obtained permission to go to Madrid, and we thought it would be a blessing to us all our days if we did but touch the holy coat. I will fix a place in the back of the wagon," continued sister Isa, "and see if she will not sleep."

Having arranged Emily as comfortable as possible, she devoted herself to her companion, and so interested him in the account of the sacred relic that he expressed an earnest wish to see it; and at length induced by a liberal present of money, he agreed to carry them the entire distance.

Thus far had Providence directed their course, and their hearts leaped for joy. Toward the close of the second day of their journey they bid adieu to their travelling companion, and leaving him to visit the sacred coat, they went at once to a small inn, where Isa could obtain a pass to the English consul. This she was aware was a dangerous step, for she feared it would excite suspicion; but pretending to be upon an errand of mercy to one of his servants, she soon received the requisite information and document.

CHAPTER VI.

Who can describe the joy which thrilled the heart of Emily, when she once more set her foot upon her native soil? She with her companion have long since laid aside the habiliments of a nun, and assumed the English dress provided them by the consul's lady. Not one moment would the returning wife allow herself for repose, but travelled day and night until she reached her native village. But she could not stop there, she still hurried on.

"Oh! Emily, my heart aches for thee, methinks, thou wilt regret thou ever left thy dungeon to find thy place so soon supplied."

It was twilight when they reached Cheswell; and Emily rather flew than ran to Rosedale, her cottage home, when a sudden impulse led her to turn aside into a narrow lane leading her to the back part of the house, to her own little room where she had passed so many happy days.

A bright light was in the apartment; but the curtains were not yet drawn. She approached quickly. One window opened upon the balcony which led by steps into the garden. Emily hastily ascended the steps, when—oh! could it be so? Was it not a fearful dream? She saw her husband—her own Charles tossing an infant in his arms, who was crowing with delight. He then put the chirping boy into the hands of a lady who received him with maternal fondness, and upon whose forehead he, yes, *her* husband, imprinted a tender kiss.

The horrified woman stood transfixed to the spot. Not for worlds could she have moved! She saw Mary, who had grown to resemble her lost Alice; she saw Susan come in and take the baby from the mother, but she noticed no one but her husband. Thoughts and feelings were crowding upon her, which she even then wondered had not before filled her mind.

Her companion had by this time come up, and understood all at a glance.

In the meantime, Mr. Ellingwood, who on this evening was uncommonly cheerful, sat down and

took Mary on his knee, while the lady opposite looked the very picture of contentment. Still it was not quite three years since Emily left her happy home.

Could she have forgotten so soon? No! no! She was so sure of the steadfastness and growth of her own affection, that it had not once occurred to her it could be otherwise with him.

At this moment, Mr. Ellingwood, turning around, noticed that the curtain remained undrawn, and walking slowly across the room shut them from sight.

It needed then but one motion of her finger for Emily to open the window, and throw herself into the arms of her husband. Should she do it? What woman's heart answers "yes?"

She would at that moment far sooner have returned to the dungeon, from which she had escaped, than to have had him know that she had witnessed such a scene.

Sister Isa was too conversant with Emily's feelings and hopes, not to understand well how the iron hand of grief had taken hold of her soul. When the curtain fell she put her arm around her friend, and for one moment pressed her tightly to her bosom, then half carrying her down the steps led her away.

Oh! how different was this from the overwhelming joy with which her poor Emily had fondly expected her return would be greeted! She spoke not; her lips were firmly compressed; her eyes glared wildly, as sister Isa saw by every light they passed.

What should she do? Something must be done quickly. She knew but few words of English; but she made herself understood sufficiently to ascertain that a tavern was near, and whither she led her almost unconscious charge. Yes, reason was fast leaving her throne, and by the time they arrived at their destination Emily had sunk into a kind of apathy.

Sister Isa was indeed in a deplorable condition. In her confusion and distress she could not make herself understood, she could merely point to her sick friend and make signs for a bed. The kind-hearted landlady hastened to prepare a room, and herself assisted the afflicted woman into bed.

No sooner had the hostess departed from the room than all hope left poor Isa's heart; and throwing herself on her knees by the side of the bed, wept bitterly.

For some time she gave way to her grief; then she suddenly started at the recollection that Emily had not stirred, or given signs of life. Isa held the candle before her face to see if she breathed, but the flame wavered not, and with

a horrible fear lest life was extinct, she ran hastily for assistance.

A physician was immediately called, who found his patient in a deep swoon. It was the good Dr. Crosby; but he would as soon have thought of seeing his own wife, who had been dead twenty years, raise from her grave, as of recognizing his esteemed, departed friend, Mrs. Ellingwood, in the poor, unconscious creature before him. He questioned Isa as to the cause of her friend's sickness, but could make nothing of her answers.

Indeed the good sister knew not what to say. Had she understood that the man standing before her was one of Emily's earliest friends, she would have made a great effort to make herself known.

After prescribing some powerful remedies, and waiting until she began to revive he left, promising to call again in two or three hours. He was on his way to see a patient who lived several miles distant, but would look in as he returned.

Sister Isa followed implicitly the directions of the physician. She had always been accustomed to the care of the sick; and vigorously chafing the limbs of the patient, she sat down to watch the operation of the medicine. But when fifteen, twenty minutes, then an hour passed and Emily grew no better, she came to a sudden determination that when the doctor returned, she would by some means communicate to him her desire to see Mr. Ellingwood. When she had decided upon this, she began to be very impatient for the doctor to arrive, and feared lest life might be gone ere that time.

The landlady, who continued in the room, was puzzled to understand the condition or conduct of her guests. She could not make out what relation existed between them. Poor Isa now wept and wrung her hands, then violently embraced her inanimate friend, kissing her repeatedly.

Thus the hours wore away. Emily was still able to swallow the cordial with which her lips were wet; and this was the only indication to them that life remained when Dr. Crosby returned. On entering the room, he was not a little startled when sister Isa sprang up, seized both his hands, and said, "Seignor Ellingwood," then pointing to the bed, said in Spanish, "she see him." As he shook his head in token that he could not understand her, she repeated it in French, and was overjoyed to find that he understood her wish to see Mr. Ellingwood.

The kind man, who supposed she wished merely for a clergyman, and who really thought the patient would not survive until morning, proposed to go for him at once.

The silence of midnight reigned at the parsonage. Mr. and Mrs. Ellingwood were startled from their slumber by a loud ringing of the door bell. He hastily threw up the window and inquiring who was there, recognized the familiar voice of Dr. Crosby, desiring him to dress quickly and to come below, as a dying person wished to see him.

Hurrying on his clothes, he went out of the room, saying, "Go to sleep, Lucy, I shall not probably be gone long."

"Oh! Lucy, how little dost thou realize that never—no, never shalt thou share his couch again!—never see him more!"

During their hasty walk, Dr. Crosby related to his companion all that he knew of his patient; but that was very little; he only knew that she was dying and wished to see a minister. The Rector followed the physician directly to the chamber, where he was impatiently expected.

During the short absence of the doctor Emily had suddenly revived, which the landlady thought a precursor of death. Sister Isa sat on the bed supporting her charge in her arms when they entered. For one moment the poor wife gazed fixedly upon her husband; then with a convulsive start she gave one fearful shriek, while her arms were outstretched toward him, and fell back insensible.

Mr. Ellingwood sprang forward, and with one bound reached the bed; where snatching a candle from the table, he held it so that the light could shine upon her face, when with a joyful, yet terrible cry, "*Oh! my God!—oh! my Emily!*" sank upon his knees overpowered by his emotion!

The doctor thought him insane, and approaching the bed looked earnestly in the face of the poor sufferer; but for a long time could trace no resemblance to his beloved friend. With great anxiety he felt her pulse and administered restoratives, but with indifferent success. She would sometimes revive a little, then with a sob as from a breaking heart, would again sink away.

Her husband held her hand in his while he continued on his knees by her side, and seemed almost overwhelmed with joy. He feared to wake and find it a delusive dream. Could it be that his own Emily, whom for years he had supposed to be an inhabitant of another world, were indeed restored to him? He did not think she would die. Oh! no, she must live! God would not have restored her to take her so soon away. From his inmost soul the prayer was constantly rising, "Blessed Lord, spare her life!—oh! spare her yet a little longer!"

Through the next day Emily remained about the same, but toward evening sank into a deep

sleep, from which it was impossible to rouse her. Mr. Ellingwood had not for one instant left her side. As he conversed readily in Spanish, he soon drew from sister Isa the events of the last three years; but when she informed him of their arrival at Cheswell, of their visit to the cottage of Rosedale, of the discovery which had proved so fatal to her poor Emily, he started to his feet. He for the first time realized the horror of his situation as the husband of two living wives. He thought not of himself—not of Lucy—but of the agony such a discovery must have given Emily. He wept aloud; and the sympathizing woman wept with him. She realized even more fully than he did the trials before him, for she felt that if the poor inanimate form before her was restored to life, she would be lost to him forever.

Dr. Crosby considered this the crisis of her disease. If she awoke refreshed there might be room for hope of her recovery; but if not, she would probably have a short season of consciousness and sink rapidly in death. Isa pointed to her hair, which from being on their arrival slightly sprinkled with grey, was now white as snow. Her afflicted husband sat by her side weeping and praying, while the good sister kept a sponge wet with brandy at her lips. All was silent as death, save the ticking of the watch in the doctor's hand. Every few minutes he held a mirror to her lips to see if she breathed. He evidently thought her dying. At length he pressed a spoonful of wine between her teeth, and finding she could swallow gave her a powerful stimulant, which soon produced a perceptible increase of pulse. From this time she slowly, very slowly recovered, until the doctor joyfully pronounced her out of danger.

The invalid thought herself still in the dungeon. She recognized no one but her dear, kind Isa and Mary, whom she thought was Alice. She lived over again her life in the cell, and her faithful nurse in following the doctor's directions humored all her fancies.

It is time now to turn to Rosedale. The news that Mrs. Ellingwood was alive, had returned, and was now lying at the point of death, spread rapidly through the town, and could not long be kept from the inmates of the cottage. Susan was so overcome with joy that she could not speak, and began to cry heartily. Mary knew not what to think. She was glad, very glad, but her pleasure was not unmixed with pain. She was devotedly attached to her baby brother, and was well aware that if her own mother returned, her step-mother and dear, sweet Charley must leave.

"But Lucy, poor, timid Lucy, what will become of thee? How hard it would be for thy husband to send thee away!"

Lucy Mansfield would not wait to be sent away. No sooner was she convinced that the person supposed to be dying was Mrs. Emily Ellingwood than all her timidity vanished. She was changed at once. She sat down and wrote a letter of several sheets, which in a husky voice she requested Susan to give to Mr. Ellingwood; then with womanly fortitude, taking a small bundle containing a change of clothes for herself and child, she left her sweet home forever. She dared not give herself a moment for thought, but did at once what every true woman would do. Mary ran weeping after her. The bereaved woman turned, laid the baby on the grass, and held the child of her adoption in a long, close embrace, then turning away, said in a voice so full of sorrow that Mary never forgot it, "You will never see me more."

The poor girl returned to the house weeping bitterly, where she was soon joined by Susan, who now realized the dreadful situation of her late mistress, but respected her more than ever for her decision and self-denial.

As soon as Dr. Crosby considered it safe, Emily was removed to the parsonage, where, with Isa and Mary, she occupied her own room fitted up for her convenience as an invalid. Susan related the circumstances of Lucy's departure to Mr. Ellingwood, who at this time had only heard the fact that she was gone. He was much affected, and sighing heavily, he said, "I fear I did wrong in marrying her, entertaining, as I did, only a *brotherly* affection."

"She only said," replied Susan, "that she thought you would never take her child from her."

Lucy's letter to Mr. Ellingwood was destined to undeceive him in regard to the nature of her affection; for there she poured out all the love which she had heretofore so carefully concealed from him. In concluding her letter, she said, "You will see me no more; farewell, forever farewell!"

In the meantime his domestic trials continued. Emily remained in utter unconsciousness of her present situation. He longed to be able to tell her of the ardent love he bore her; to explain and beg pardon for his seeming forgetfulness. He considered it very doubtful, whether with her sensitive heart she would consent to remain his wife; yet he was determined never to give her up. For a few days he had noticed a change in her manner toward him, and became painfully conscious that he was connected with something

disagreeable in her thoughts. He at length asked sister Isa if she had noticed any such indication, who replied that she had and considered it a very favorable symptom.

Months passed away without any marked improvement in the invalid, though her mental developments were various. At one time she would be rendered frantic by the sight of her husband; then would sink into apathy which alarmed them still more. In the latter state her countenance was almost idiotic.

Dr. Crosby visited her constantly and doubted whether it would not be best for her to be removed to an insane hospital. But Mr. Ellingwood would not listen to it for a moment. He would have the best advice in England. He would spend every cent he had in the world. The parsonage might be converted into a hospital, but she should never leave him; on that point he was decided.

The doctor was alarmed to see him so much agitated, and determined to press the matter no farther. A consultation of eminent physicians was therefore called, who agreed perfectly with Dr. Crosby in his treatment of the case, advising strongly that all excitement should be avoided, as it was commonly succeeded by apathy and stupor, which was far the most alarming symptom of her complaint.

Mary often retired to weep in secret at these sufferings of her mother; and also to mourn over the loss of her dear teacher, as she again called Miss Mansfield. She longed to throw her arms about the neck of this absent friend and tell her she loved her still; and that dear baby brother, the sweet little curly-headed Charley—oh! what would she not give to see him once more.

Poor Susan, whose former attachment to her dear mistress had revived, was now wholly absorbed in her interest for her. One day, when about her household duties, she was singing a hymn; when suddenly it occurred to her that that was Mrs. Ellingwood's favorite air, to whom she had often sung it in years long, long passed. Impelled by her strong feelings, she suddenly left her work, hastened to the nursery, unloosed the long, white hair, which was closely confined under a cap, and as had formerly been her wont when thus employed, began to sing.

For one moment Emily caught her breath, then turning quickly, exclaimed, "Why Susan," in her own rational voice. No one present dared to speak; but Susan, with wonderful presence of mind, said calmly, though she feared her heart would burst it beat so wildly, "Did I hurt you, ma'am? I'm in something of a hurry to get it done before Mr. Ellingwood comes in."

Isa turned pale and shook her head at Susan, as if imploring her not to spoil all by going too far; yet the faithful woman took no notice, but continued, "Well, Mrs. Ellingwood, I'll put on the brown dress to-day," and going to the wardrobe, took from it a dress which had formerly been a favorite one of Emily's, and which had been unpacked from a trunk a few days previous, in order to be repaired for her. This the kind woman assisted her to put on, significantly winking to Mary to go and prepare her father to come in. But presently fearing to trust him to enter, lest he should not understand what had happened, she said, "Mrs. Ellingwood, if you'll just sit there a minute, I'll come back and fix your collar on; now please don't go to moving, you ain't so strong as you used to be."

Emily leaned back in the easy-chair, and her face was so pale that sister Isa feared she would faint; yet there was a natural expression upon it she had not seen for many a day; and she dared not stir for fear of jostling reason from its throne. How great then was her joy, when, turning toward where she sat, Emily said, "Susan is a dear, faithful soul; but, Isa, how came we here?"—putting her hand to her head to quiet its throbbings, as she suddenly perceived she was in her own room.

At this moment Mr. Ellingwood entered, endeavoring to appear calm; but his pale, agitated face betrayed his struggling emotions. The instant that Emily heard his step she started from her chair, and running forward threw herself into his arms, where she fainted from excess of joy. Her husband laid her tenderly upon a couch, but could no longer restrain his feelings. Hastily retiring to his study he poured forth his heart in gratitude to God for this undeserved, unexpected mercy; then quickly returning, found to his unspeakable joy that when his beloved wife awoke, the light of reason beamed from her eye, and that she recognized all about her.

From this time she rapidly recovered health and strength. The startling discovery she had made through the long window opening upon the balcony seemed altogether obliterated from her memory; and as far as they could learn, she was altogether ignorant that another had ever filled her place.

For a long time the fear that she would suddenly learn this, was a source of constant anxiety to her husband, lest her reason might again be dethroned; but after two years she was so perfectly recovered, and her whole character seemed so softened and subdued by suffering, that he thought it best to tell her his whole history during her absence.

The doctor, however, advised otherwise, and thought the longer he could keep it from her the better, and the less likely would she be to feel it her duty to leave him. With almost any other person it would be different; but with her excessive sensitiveness and high sense of honor the result might be fatal to her happiness, if not to her life.

CHAPTER VII.

FIVE years had now passed since Emily's return to Cheswell. Sister Isa, for so every one called her, was still a valued member of the family at Rosedale. She visited the sick, comforted the afflicted, and was in the very best sense of the term a Sister of Charity, both in her own character and in the feelings with which she inspired others.

Mary was married and settled near the paternal dwelling. In the course of her education her father had often called to mind the remark of her grandfather, that he had regretted when too late, that he had not educated his daughter's judgment more, and her feeling or impulse less. He had never indulged her in giving way to sudden outbursts of emotion, either joyous or grievous; and he now had the satisfaction of seeing her well settled in life, happy in her social relation, and beloved by all around her.

Susan still continued faithful in all her duties, and rejoicing in the prosperity of her beloved friends; and though she never mentioned Miss Mansfield, or the child who had become so dear to her, she often thought of them, and would willingly have walked a hundred miles to see them once more.

Of Mr. Ellingwood's feelings with regard to them no one could judge, as he never spoke of them; but there were those who believed that the thought of Lucy and his child caused him no small anxiety.

It was ascertained that he having learned that she had left his house, had requested Dr. Crosby to institute a strict search for her; that the doctor had done this, and had soon found that upon leaving Rosedale, Miss Mansfield had gone to the residence of a dear friend in whom she knew she could confide; her father having died during her residence at the parsonage, and having given free vent to her feelings, she sought advice as to the course she should pursue.

"I can never see him again," exclaimed the poor, sobbing woman, "for my own sake as well as for hers I must leave here immediately and forever. He never loved me but as a sister, but I have loved him too well, and now it is sin,"

said she, covering her face with her hands. "Oh! God, help me in this hour of my distress." Her friend at length succeeded in soothing her, and a plan was subsequently arranged whereby Lucy went to India with a brother, who was at that time visiting his native country. This was all that had been known of her; and this only to a very few individuals.

One morning when the post-boy entered, he gave Mr. Ellingwood a letter that had the India mark upon the wrapper; and on looking at it a moment he recognized the writing of Lucy. He tried to appear unmoved; but fearing to attract Emily's attention to himself, he left the room. As he did not return immediately, his wife arose and followed him to the study.

What then was her surprise upon opening the door to see him upon his knees; and while his voice quivered with emotions, he was concluding his prayers in these words, "My God, again I thank Thee for this intelligence which removes a mountain weight from my mind!"

Then hearing a noise and perceiving Emily, he started to his feet and caught her in his arms, and in his joy embraced her tenderly.

"What is this?" asked she, not at all understanding what he could mean.

"My dear Emily," replied he, "I have had a secret for five years; and it has at times almost crushed me, because I could not share it with you. Now I am determined since receiving this letter," continued he, holding it up, "to live so no longer. Are you prepared to hear something very strange? Here, my more than ever loved wife, sit on my knee and listen to many things which occurred while you were absent, and of which you are entirely ignorant."

Emily, pale and trembling, did as he requested; when he opened his whole heart to her, from the beginning of his acquaintance with Lucy; then taking the letter from the table he read thus:

"DEAR AND RESPECTED FRIEND—No doubt you have often wondered what was the fate of Lucy

Mansfield. As I think the information I can now give of myself would be gratifying to you, I gladly embrace the present opportunity to write you. I have been for two years married to an English gentleman residing here, by the name of Woodfield. I became acquainted with him soon after I arrived in India; and he proposed marriage at that time, supposing I was a widow. I told him my true circumstances; and when he still pressed his suit, and wished to adopt dear Charley for his own and educate him for a clergyman, which was the earnest desire of my heart. I freely told him the shock I had received was so great that nought but time could restore me. He expressed himself willing to wait, which he did for two years and a half.

"The sweet precious bud which was unfolding itself so gracefully, was transplanted to the heavenly Paradise just one month after my marriage. Enclosed I send you a lock of his hair, which fell in a curl over his blessed forehead. I have rejoiced sincerely in the recovery of your restored Emily, and thank God that in all your intercourse with me you were frank and honest as to the state of your own heart; otherwise I think the shock would have been fatal to me. But I felt that you only loved me as a sister; and this aided me in conquering my love for you. Now I can say I am truly happy.

"With grateful remembrance to dear Mary and faithful Susan, I remain your sincere friend,
LUCY W. WOODFIELD."

"P. S. By this vessel I have sent some small tokens to the loved inmates of Rosedale, which they will gratify me by accepting from an old friend.
L. W. W."

Not one word had Emily spoken until the letter was concluded. Then taking the sweet curl from her husband's hand, her tears fell quick and fast upon it, and with the words "blessed boy," she kissed her husband's forehead and left the room.

ADA LESTER'S SEASON IN NEW YORK.

BY CARRY STANLEY.

PART IV.

NEW YORK, May 12th.

I FEEL, Maggie, as though I should die if I staid here. Nothing but home can restore me. If you hear of any of our friends in C—— who will be in New York soon, for a few days, tell them I shall be glad of an escort. I dare not write papa to come for me, for fear of alarming my mother and himself.

My friends notice my increasing paleness. Uncle says I am so thoroughly a country girl, that he fears the city air does not agree with me; the rest insist on it that it is because I take so little amusement; and Louise adds triumphantly, that I can see now to what a lady would come, in New York, if she sat moping at home, like a second Dorcas, as I do.

Gertrude and George particularly are very kind. Yesterday at dinner the latter said he had taken seats at the theatre, and that we must all go, but especially myself, as a celebrated *danseuse* was to appear, whom I had never seen. I tried at first to excuse myself; for indeed, Maggie, I do not feel like going out; but George was imperative, and when Gertrude joined her entreaties, looking anxiously at me, I consented.

The curtain had just risen as we took our seats. I determined to appear interested, in return for George's kindness, so I kept my eyes fixed on the stage, though my thoughts were far enough away. At the end of the first piece, which was nothing but a one act comedy, I turned to speak to Gertrude, when to my surprise I saw Horace Blanchard sitting between her and Louise. I started, for he was the last person I expected to see: and I fear I colored also: I felt at least as if I did. Since the night of the music party I have seen but little of him. He comes as rarely as possible to my uncle's, and I suspect would come less frequently, if it was not that he fears to awaken inquiry. Sometimes I am in the drawing-room, and sometimes not; I never go down if I hear he is there; but I never leave it either when he enters. Louise monopolizes the principal share of his conversation; laughs and talks with him; and really has, I begin to suspect, designs on his heart. She will marry him, perhaps. Oh! how false and

hollow, Maggie, this life here is, and how one loathes it.

I cannot altogether understand Mr. Blanchard, however. Frequently, if I happen to look up, I find his eyes fixed on me with a mournful, inquiring gaze. Sometimes, when he is trifling with Louise's work, or carrying on a war of gay *repartee* with her, I think he is more bitter in his wit than formerly. Last night when I turned to Gertrude, he was watching me with that sad, scrutinizing look. In spite of evidence to the contrary, I almost, for the moment, doubted his guilt.

In a short time the bell rung and the curtain rose. The *ballet*, you know, is in pantomime. The story is this. A very young girl is picked up, in some of the mountain passes of Spain, by a band of gipsies and adopted by them. As she grows older, the gipsy chief loves her with all the passion of his passionate race. She, in the meantime, has met with a young French count, in some of her wanderings, and they become enamored of each other. Then comes the gipsy's declaration of his passion, her scornful refusal of it, and his discovery that she loves the count. An enemy of the latter wishes to get him out of the way, so he appeals to the gipsy's jealousy and avarice, and the chief promises to put the count to death. All this the girl discovers, whilst concealed in a room where the conspirators are. The count is to be inveigled there, have a narcotic put into his wine, and whilst asleep to be stabbed. But woman's wit never fails. The count comes in, suspecting nothing. The girl manages to inform her lover of his danger whilst the gipsy's back is turned. By a manœuvre of her's, which makes the gipsy start to his feet and look around, as quick as lightning she changes the wine cups, and the chief drinks off the potion prepared for the count.

Well, Maggie, all this pantomime seemed to tell the story more vividly than words could have done.

When the heroine of the story came on the stage, it was with a bound as light as a fawn's. I can imagine nothing human so graceful. Oh! if I could but describe her dancing. Now she swayed backward and forward with the lightness of a willow branch. Now she rose and fell, rose

and fell silently and dreamily as a fountain by moonlight. Now, all at once, she darted away, circled around and around, and came down again with a low, graceful swoop, like a white sea-bird settling upon the water. For a moment the audience was hushed in admiration; then a deep, long-drawn breath was heard over the whole house; and when this had passed the tempest of applause burst, shaking the theatre with enthusiastic "bravos," and covering the stage with its showers of bouquets.

This is in a dance before the governor of the province, and after it comes the love-making of the chief. The gipsy girl draws herself up in an attitude the most scornful I ever saw; and then, as if the proud woman suddenly dissolved into the wild girl, in the very abandon of mischief she lures the chief on, gliding up to him with airy steps, giving and withdrawing her hand, enticing him till he is again on his knees before her; then with a sudden bound she is off again a few paces from him, standing on tip-toe, and one little foot twinkling in his face, her figure again drawn up in scorn, but her whole countenance running over with mischief.

The scene where she is commanded to dance before the count, in order to lull his suspicions, after he is entrapped into the gipsy's room, comes next. The chief, by mistake, has taken the narcotic, but she is fearful that the gipsy gang will return before he is fairly asleep, so that her lover, in spite of her efforts to save him, will be put to death. You can see the whole agony and expectation now in her countenance and figure as the gipsy becomes slightly drowsy. Her steps keep lightning time with her clattering castanets. She sways backward and forward around the chief, fanning him into a deeper slumber with the waving of her figure, as it were, watching the gradual stupor creeping over him, till he at last sleeps soundly, and then she gives way. Nature can do no more. Her step grows slower and slower, the castanets scarcely clash in her hands, she sinks back, and they fall clattering to the floor.

But her last dance, in which she appears with her lover, in the brilliantly lighted saloon of her uncle, was still more astonishing. I now realized, for the first time, what I had read of Taglioni, and often laughed at as extravagant; for music was never more harmonious than her movements; nor could poetry ever call up more beautiful visions than her speaking face.

No warning was given of her coming. But suddenly, in the midst of a breathless hush, she appeared; her robe of illusion floating around her with its voluminous folds like a rose colored

cloud. She crossed the upper end of the stage with a bound, lighting, like a bird, on the very tip of her little foot; but before one thought her fairly settled she was off again; and now came circling down the stage like a snow-flake softly whirling on the air. The orchestral accompaniment sank into a whisper, as if fearing to break the spell of the dancer. The audience gazed with suspended breath. Involuntarily I leaned forward. She had stopped in front of the footlights, and kneeling on one knee, her head thrown swan-like back, her arms swaying around her, she slowly subsided into rest. It was like the dying sound of a horn across evening waters.

The hush was prolonged for a moment; and then, like a crash of thunder, came the applause. The gentlemen rose *en masse*. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs. Bouquets rained on the stage. The house rocked from parquette to ceiling with the clapping of hands, the shouts and the "encores." For an instant there was a lull. All this time the dancer still knelt. But now her head was bowed, and her arms crossed over her breast as if in meek deprecation of this homage. The sight roused the enthusiasm of the spectators to a higher pitch than ever, and the applause burst forth again now absolutely deafening. Oh! it was the grandest sight in the world, Maggie. I fairly shed tears.

When the excitement had subsided a little, I turned to Gertrude again, and once more caught Mr. Blanchard's eyes fixed earnestly on me. I felt my color rise to my temples under his gaze. He seemed embarrassed at being detected, and began immediately to whisper with Louise. But, a minute afterward, when I thoughtlessly looked again, he was watching me anew. I shall never recall that look without thinking he is innocent. And oh! Maggie, what if I have condemned him unjustly.

Yours, ADA.

NEW YORK, May 18th.

FORGIVE my folly, dear Maggie, in writing as I did at the close of my last, for I allowed myself almost to question Mr. Blanchard's guilt. I weep for shame when I recall it.

There is not a shadow of doubt now—not a shadow, Maggie. I have had this morning, with my own eyes, evidence of his crime.

Lately I have been in the habit of rising very early, and taking a walk before breakfast. Sometimes it has been but a short one, and I have returned before the family was up; then again breakfast has been nearly finished before I reached home. This morning I strolled on unconsciously till I reached Union Park. I opened the great iron gates and went in. I suppose

everything looked beautifully. The morning sunshine must have been bright, and the grass green in its young strength; the leaves on the trees must have seemed so happily busy, as they danced and swayed in the breeze. But it all had a sickly look to me. You know the peculiar appearance of Nature, when seen through a smoked glass; well, I feel as if I should always see the world through a smoked glass now. And then the birds singing too! How *can* the little bird sing in such a great city? Their strain was very sad, at least I thought so, and that it was right it should be so.

I was sauntering listlessly along down one of the gravel walks, when I saw, coming toward me, Horace Blanchard walking with Lucy Barclay. There was no way of avoiding them, except by turning back. Suddenly she looked up at me. All this had taken but a moment. Yet in that interval I had realized all her beauty. When I saw her before it was at a comparative distance; but now she was quite close; and moreover was gazing directly at me, as if something in my appearance attracted her attention.

I think I never saw such a face. As fair, and child-like, and innocent as a little babe's. But alas! that sweet mouth was too flexible and tremulous to possess any strength; and the deep blue eyes only looked like pleading. No wonder that Horace Blanchard, with all his fascinations, could sway a girl like that to his will. And no wonder that she believes even yet that he will marry her, and forgives him. Such a one "will love through all things," and die loving.

As they came on they were conversing, and I heard her say to him, "You are *sure* they will receive me?" Oh, Maggie! you should have heard that voice; so low and silvery, and with an indescribably lady-like intonation; but most of all, you should have seen the grateful look with which it was accompanied. How *could* any man have taken advantage of one so trusting? The villain! to still lure her on with false hopes, pretending that he would yet marry her, and that his family would welcome her.

Her companion did not answer, for just then he heard my step, and looked up. Our eyes met. I felt mine flash with indignation. Had my life depended on it I could not have helped it. Mr. Blanchard started, colored, and looked aside in confusion. I scarcely know what followed. But I believe I showed in my face the haughty disdain I felt, for as I passed I glanced at the poor girl beside him; and her bewildered, deprecating, even supplicatory look, haunts me to this moment. I hope she did not think I meant it for her. But I fear she did.

I have been all day since in a state of feverish excitement. It is a relief to write to you. To think that this was the man, who, only night before last, had almost persuaded me, by his demeanor, that he could not be guilty.

Is it right, Maggie, that this poor girl should be allowed still to be juggled by that man's promises, yet no one raise a hand to save her?

God help her! God help me also, and show me what is right. I am so bewildered that I feel as if all judgment and reason had deserted me.

Yours, ADA.

New York, May 16th.

I WILL try to be calm, dear, *dearest* Maggie, but I scarcely know how to tell you what I have to say. Let me commence at the beginning.

This morning the girls went up to Lawson's "opening" to select their millinery; and Gertrude, who was waiting for George to accompany us in a drive, came into my room.

"It is a glorious day, and the country must be looking beautifully. I do wish George had asked Mr. Blanchard to go with us," said she.

As I could not reiterate her wish I was silent.

"I really think Horace Blanchard the finest man I know—except my *husband* of course," she continued, after a pause.

"Is he?" said I, in a voice which I vainly endeavored should not be constrained, for I felt that I must say something.

"Yes, and I am astonished that you do not seem to like him more. I should think you would suit each other exactly. Your tastes and opinions are so much alike."

I overturned my work-basket, and the picking up and arranging of my sewing implements, prevented the necessity of my replying.

Gertrude has a vast deal of tact, but I never saw her so pertinacious as she was this morning. She continued,

"Why Ella said that you used to be so intimate with Horace before we came back, and that all at once you behaved so coldly toward him. She hinted vaguely of some story which you had heard of him."

"Did she?" I muttered, not knowing what else to say, and in my agitation trying in vain to thread my needle.

Gertrude was silent again, and arose and walked to the window. I saw that she waited to be questioned, but I had suffered too much to willingly open the wound anew.

"It was about Lucy Barclay, poor thing, I suppose," said she, after awhile.

Her persistence annoyed me, and I made no answer.

"He's not so much to blame as you think," Lucy grew up meantime almost like brother and sister.

she said, after another pause.

I spoke now, for I was thoroughly angry. To think that *she* too should look upon such a dreadful crime as a light thing. "Pshaw!" said I, and I know my lip curled with all the loathing I felt. "I suppose you mean to say that she seduced him—that it was *her* fault," and before the sentence was completed, my voice was fairly quivering with indignation.

"Ada Lester, you know nothing at all about it," she said, suddenly standing before me, and with her dignified manner, which none can resist.

I was awed for the moment only, then I said hurriedly, "I know more than I wish to, Gertrude. This subject *must* be dropped hereafter, between us." I arose and gathered my sewing materials together, as if to put an end to the conversation. It was growing unbearable.

My companion moved restlessly about the room for a few minutes, then she said,

"I am afraid, Ada, that the 'charity which suffereth long and is kind,' is not a part of your religion. You must hear what I have to say in exculpation of Horace Blanchard."

I was wrought up to a pitch of agony, which was unendurable. "For God's sake, Gertrude," I cried, "why will you torture me so? Do leave me."

"Ada, I *will* not leave you till you hear me," was her reply; and taking my hand, she drew me to her side.

"Lucy, poor thing, is an orphan," she began. "Her father was a humble country clergyman, and died when she was but four years old. Her mother came to the city with her child to obtain work; and among her patrons was Mrs. Blanchard. Poverty and grief soon laid her beside her husband, and in her last moments Mrs. Blanchard promised to take care of the child. Mrs. Blanchard, I think, only intended at first to give her a very plain education, and then apprentice her to some trade, by which she could make a living for herself; but, you know, she has no daughters of her own, and insensibly the beautiful and affectionate child wound herself so around the heart of her patroness, that the good woman determined on a different destiny for her. She gave her all the advantages of an excellent school, made a will, that in case of her death the child would be secured from want, and determined to keep her with her as a companion. Mrs. Blanchard's delicate health made this the more desirable, and Lucy, who was devotedly attached to her adopted mother, sewed for her, read to her, and nursed her most tenderly. Horace and

"Last winter was a year, Mrs. Blanchard's illness assumed a more serious form; she was confined entirely to her chamber, and a great deal of the time to her bed. Lucy was her constant and only nurse. Doctor Franklin, who had been her physician for years, was himself ill, and not able to attend her; but his son, also a physician, who was just getting into practice, came in his place. He is a very handsome man, and remarkably agreeable in his manners. Day after day, throughout the whole winter, his visits continued. Lucy was always in the room. It was Lucy who met him at the head of the staircase when he came in; it was Lucy who took his directions with regard to the medicines; it was Lucy who again saw him to the staircase when he departed."

Maggie, I found myself here, leaning eagerly over toward Gertrude, drinking in every word with a wild hope trembling around my heart. Gertrude had paused a moment, then again resumed.

"Mrs. Blanchard grew better toward spring, but her sweet young nurse was becoming paler and thinner every day. Young Franklin was still the physician. Mrs. Blanchard spoke anxiously about Lucy. The doctor recommended fresh air and exercise. This her patroness compelled Lucy to take daily. But alas! she knew not that the poor girl was always accompanied by the physician who had prescribed the remedy. Lucy's sweet face soon bore unmistakable traces of intense mental agony. In vain Mrs. Blanchard questioned her, she only answered with her tears. Thus the spring and summer wore on. Mrs. Blanchard went to her sister's on the Hudson to pass a week. Lucy excused herself from accompanying her as she had heretofore done; and when Mrs. Blanchard returned she was *gone*. She left a wild, incoherent letter, saying she had disgraced one whom she had loved more than a mother, and had gone to hide her misery and shame where none would hear of her. From what could be gathered from words so wild, her struggles had been terrible. But poor, innocent child, her loving heart was no match for the lawless passions of her betrayer. She gave no name, but said he had promised to marry her. Mrs. Blanchard's suspicions immediately fell on young Franklin. A thousand little circumstances, unnoticed at the time, fully confirmed her in this idea. She sent immediately to his office, but he had gone to Europe. Whilst a doubt remained, she dared not worry his father with the story after his own severe illness. Horace, who had

been out in the far West, was hurried home. Every exertion was made to find the poor girl; but with no avail. The servants and neighbors sometimes talked of a pale face and woe-worn figure that glided up and down before Mrs. Blanchard's house at night; but nothing definite could be obtained. Horace went to Europe, and sought out Dr. Franklin, who acknowledged his crime, but refused to marry Lucy——"

I could bear it no longer, Maggie. I had risen and paced the room, some time before; and now I burst into hysteric weeping, and flung myself on the bed. Gertrude left me to myself for awhile; then came and sat down by me and passed her soft hand across my brow. It soothed me like magnetism.

At last she resumed. "Horace's entreaties to young Franklin were in vain. He said he really loved Lucy, but that his family would never receive the humble companion of Mrs. Blanchard as his wife. Horace, you know, returned home in December. In the meantime search was again instituted for Lucy, but again in vain. Young Franklin had positively denied any knowledge of her residence. It was through you, Ada, that she was at last discovered."

"Me?"

"Yes, Horace went one morning to call on Mrs. Richards, and saw Lucy coming out of a house opposite. He crossed over, laid his hand on her shoulder and called her by name. He said she nearly fainted. He went back with her to the house, and eagerly assured the poor girl of his mother's forgiveness. Her only reply when he told her of the search which had been made for her was, 'Oh! if you had only never found me—oh! if you had only never found me.' By degrees he learned that she had gone off to the country, after she had left home, and there eked out the little money she took with her by sewing. Just before her child was born she returned to the city, still supporting herself by her needle. Her baby died. A woman who nursed her said that her grief for it, and her ravings for the father, who had promised to marry her, was terrible. Horace went very frequently to see her, carrying her money and kind messages from his mother, whom she at first utterly refused to see again. But he did more than that. Young Dr. Franklin returned about two weeks ago from Europe. Horace waited upon him immediately, and again proposed his marrying Lucy, and he again refused, saying he still loved her, but could not marry her on account of his family. Horace is as quick to act as to conceive. He took young Franklin by the arm and walked immediately into his father's office. There, to the son's

astonishment, with but little circumlocution, he told Dr. Franklin the whole story. The father is a rigid Presbyterian, and though no doubt it cost his pride some pangs, he did not hesitate as to his duty: young Franklin was commanded to marry Lucy, or else be discarded. The gratitude of the poor girl, I learn, was most painful to witness, and she has behaved beautifully through it all. She refused to see her lover till she was to stand beside him as his wife. Horace prevailed on her a few days ago to see his mother, and she at length consented. It was an ordeal which her timid nature could not endure alone, so he met her yesterday morning, which was to be her first visit, and accompanied her back to Mrs. Blanchard. She is to be privately married at their house in the course of a few days, and leave the city immediately."

I had no tears, Maggie, at the end of Gertrude's recital, but every nerve in my frame was quivering with excitement.

After a few moments Gertrude rose to go, saying she must see if the carriage had come. I suspect it had never been ordered.

I was not satisfied yet. I caught hold of her dress, and gasped out,

"When did you learn all this?"

"I knew the first part of the affair when I was in Europe, and Horace has kept my husband informed of the progress of events since our return; but," said she, with a smile, "I never imagined how important it was that you should know the story too till yesterday."

I believe I muttered "What do you mean?" although I suspected that I very well knew.

"Nothing, except that you told the whole thing in a glance to Horace, when you met him with poor Lucy in the park, and he, for the first time, suspected that he was bearing another man's sin. By the way, Ada, I would advise you, as a friend, to learn to wear a fashionable face, and not let it be telling tales on you all the time."

"How do you know I met them in the park?" I faltered out.

"How do I know?" and she laughed gaily, "why didn't he spend half of the day in hunting George up, and when he found him wanted him to leave off giving directions about our new house, in order to coax me to tell you the story somehow! But I had half a mind to give it up a dozen times. I never saw such an impracticable woman as you are. I pity the husband that will get you. And, by the way, Ada, is there any truth in Louise's insinuation that you are engaged to a young lawyer in C——?"

"About as much," answered I, angrily, "as

there was in her adroit confirmation of Horace Blanchard's guilt to me."

Gertrude kissed me, and left the room to look for the apocryphal carriage.

It has been hours since then, Maggie, and I was able to do nothing till I commenced writing to you. I could not quiet myself. I trembled too much to sew, and I could not read. I hardly know how the hours passed. In the midst of happy weeping I have kept murmuring to myself all the time, "He is innocent, he is innocent," as if it was too much bliss. Yours, ADA.

NEW YORK, May 24th.

My last letter from New York, dear Maggie, I think, for we shall be with you in a week.

With *uncle's permission* (for mine he seems to take as a matter of course) Mr. Blanchard will accompany us.

You ask if my "usual effrontery sustained me, in my first interview with Horace, after Gertrude's story."

I am obliged to confess that it did not. You know so much, Maggie, that you shall know all now. I had kept my room under the plea of indisposition all day. I think I was never so still in my life as at dinner time. I was in such a happy dream I could not talk. Gertrude and George both kindly shielded me from observation as much as possible, but the latter could not, for the life of him, keep from sending laughing glances across the table at me. That evening happened to be the one on which the girls have their weekly *converzione*, to which about twenty or thirty of their intimate friends always come.

I tried in vain to dress myself. I think there was a dream between every stroke of the hair-brush. I frequently awoke to consciousness to find myself sitting in my sewing-chair, with arms folded, and smiling in my reverie. Don't laugh too much, Maggie, but I tell you it is an absolute truth, that when I was dressed I found I had put on my walking gaiter boots instead of my black satin slippers. I do not know to this moment how they got on, but there they were neatly laced, and my dressing slippers and satin shoes were arranged cosily side by side on the wash-stand. This incident recalled me to myself somewhat, though Gertrude came into my room and said that she had knocked half a dozen times at least and got no answer; but I do not believe her.

After all my heart failed me. I felt as if I *could not* go down stairs and meet Mr. Blanchard. Gertrude coaxed some time in vain, till she put forth one unanswerable argument—"It will be a great deal less embarrassing to meet him thus

than alone." So I slowly followed her down the staircase. I really behaved like a child. I laugh now when I think of it. When we got nearly to the bottom, without stopping to consider, I suddenly turned and rushed up again to my own room. Gertrude came panting and laughing after me. "I couldn't help it," was all my excuse.

"Now, Ada," said Gertrude, still laughing, "I'll just tell you what it is, if you do not go down with me, I'll send Horace up for you."

"Goodness gracious! Gertrude do have a little patience," and with these words I again followed her. The drawing-room was brilliantly lighted and the doors open. As we reached it, I saw groups scattered about gaily talking; but immediately opposite the door was Mr. Blanchard and George earnestly conversing. I could not help shrinking behind Gertrude, and a little to one side. Mr. Blanchard looked up, saw her, and anxiously scanned her face; I suppose she telegraphed back favorably, for his whole countenance lighted up, and his quick glance darted past her to where I stood. Then he came forward, and half frankly, half hesitatingly, took my hand. Censorious people, dear Maggie, might have said that he retained it longer than was absolutely necessary, but I had not the heart to find fault with it. This seemed to satisfy him, and he was too considerate to increase my agitation, which I knew he saw, by addressing a word to me except on ordinary subjects in the presence of others. But I felt him hovering near me all the evening. Only as he was taking leave, whilst the others were busily talking, he bent down his head and whispered, "Are we friends now, Ada?" I do not believe I said a word in reply, but I judged by his face that he was quite contented, for all.

The next morning, Gertrude produced a German song from some mysterious, unpacked trunk, which she could not learn without I played the accompaniment for her; at least so she said.

We had been at the piano but a short time, when I heard the hall bell ring. I played falsely in my trepidation, and then stopped altogether. Gertrude went on rolling out the horrible gutturals with the utmost coolness, giving me a *punch* in the shoulder, with a "Why don't you go on?" I played away vigorously again, and by the time Mr. Blanchard entered the parlor, was "going on" with as much energy and as bad time as Gertrude could wish. She greeted Mr. Blanchard warmly, but I was too much occupied to do more than bow. Horace drew a chair up to the piano, and as my cousin stopped the song, I of course

was obliged to stop the accompaniment. I was beginning to feel entirely unembarrassed, when George came to the door with "How do, Blanchard? My patience, Gertrude, I believe you are like all the women, never ready. It is time now we were off to look at that furniture, and you promised to stop at Thompsons for the girls. I'll be back for you in fifteen minutes if you can be ready."

The trepidation of the previous night seized me again. I involuntarily turned around on the piano stool, and seized Gertrude's dress as she arose to go, and my next impulse was to follow her. Just then I happened to catch Mr. Blanchard's laughing eye and amused expression of countenance, and—will you believe it, Maggie?—I burst into a hearty fit of laughter, somewhat nervous, to be sure, from sympathy. I returned to the piano again as my only resource, and played away vigorously. Presently he laid his hand on mine and said, "When you have finished that intricate piece of music, Ada, I would like to speak with you." As he did not release my hand, I, of course, was obliged to stop playing, only striking a key now and then with one of my fingers.

"Would you consider the proposal made to you, some weeks ago, an insult now, Ada?" he asked, after a pause.

Had my life depended on it I could not have spoken. He clasped my hand more closely as he resumed, "I would not have given up so soon then, believe me, had I not been led to believe, through Miss Hinton, that you were already engaged. But I could not help thinking that you loved me, sometimes, in spite of that. Do you?"

I was saved the necessity, dear Maggie, of acknowledging the *degrading fact*, by hearing George enter the front door, and Gertrude descend the staircase. I sprang to the window to see the carriage drive off, and Mr. Blanchard must have had some curiosity on the subject also, for he followed me. I do not think I felt or looked like fainting, but Mr. Blanchard seemed to consider it necessary to lead me to the sofa, from which he did not release me till uncle's key was heard in the hall door.

"Hey! what's the matter, Ada?" asked the good man, in astonishment, as I rushed past him and up the staircase; but I did not think it worth while to stop, for Horace had promised to explain it all.

You cannot tell how I dreaded the ordeal of the dinner-table. I knew I should have to undergo my uncle's rallery, and something more from Louise.

"Ho, ho!" was the greeting, as I entered the dining-room somewhat late. Every eye was turned upon me except George's and Gertrude's. "Ho, ho! so you're going to take a New York husband after all, you puss! Well, I am heartily glad, for your mother can't say now that I didn't do my duty by you. You couldn't have got a finer fellow if you had tried. I've given my permission."

I involuntarily glanced at Louise. She was perfectly livid, and her great, black eyes fairly snapped with anger. Had she really loved Horace, Maggie, I should have felt truly sorry that I was disappointing her, but I think I understand her too well now not to know that it was his fortune and position, and not himself that she coveted; and that her feelings toward me are those of envy rather than jealousy.

I despatched a letter that very night to mamma; and Horace and uncle both wrote to papa by the same post, I believe.

Yesterday I received a most beautiful, affectionate note from Mrs. Blanchard, asking me if I would not lay aside formality, and come to see her before I left the city, as she was too much of an invalid to call on me. It was accompanied by an exquisite bouquet of hyacinths and roses.

Of course I consented, and Horace called for me this morning. I never felt so anxious about my appearance in my life, Maggie, nor such a wish to make a good impression.

"Here, mother, is the daughter I am going to bring you," said Horace, as we entered the room.

"I *know* that I shall love her very much," was the kind reply, accompanied by a kiss.

I felt at ease in a moment, and never passed a pleasanter hour than in that sick chamber. Mrs. Blanchard seems to be such a cheerful Christian, and such an intelligent woman, that one *must* love her.

Now, Maggie, do not laugh at me, and ask where the "smoked glass" is now; I acknowledge that I see everything through a most absurdly bright *colour de rose* medium; but it is much the pleasanter, I assure you.

In a week I hope to see you.

Ever yours, ADA.

P. S. Ella, the witch, vows she is going to be bride's-maid, to which I have consented, promising that it must be second to your charming self, dear Maggie.

C—, September 20th.

DEAR MOTHER—Ada and Horace left this morning on their bridal tour, and after the excitement of the wedding the house looks desolate enough, I assure you. One can scarcely realize

that these drawing-rooms, with their faded flowers and falling evergreens, were the scene only last night of so much gaiety and life. I really think that half of C—— was crowded into the house, or rather in the house and piazzas; for fortunately the evening was delightful, and the greater part of the younger portion of the company preferred the brilliant moonlight and fresh air to the solar lights and warm rooms.

Ada strenuously objected to all this parade at first, but her friend Maggie Hazleton and Ella nearly broke their hearts at the idea of a private wedding, when they were to look so charming, and Mrs. Lester said, that as Ada was going away to live, she thought it would be the easiest and most gratifying way to most of her acquaintance in C—— to bid them farewell in this manner.

Ada at last yielded, for she was too thoroughly happy to think that anything of the kind can make much difference to her.

I suppose that I could not convince yourself and Louise, who are even yet in all the excitement of Newport beaux and belles, of the very delightful season which we have spent here. Ella puts on a long face when New York is mentioned.

Now I do not know whether young Hazleton, Maggie's brother, has anything to do with it, but I think if he was to ask her to laugh away life with him, (it seems to be the natural disposition of both) that no one would reasonably object to the proposal.

The society in C—— is delightful. Very much above the ordinary level in point of intelligence, and the Lesters, not only from Mr. Lester's standing as a lawyer, but for their own merits, are at the head of it.

But you said you wanted to know about the wedding, and I am telling you everything but that.

Maggie, Ella and ourselves were all day yesterday hanging the parlors with evergreens and flowers, the latter of which were most bountifully supplied by Ada's friends. I think every garden in C——, belonging to high or low, added something as a parting token to a universal favorite.

The rooms looked beautifully, I assure you.

The marriage took place at seven o'clock, and none but the family and most intimate friends were invited. At eight o'clock the other guests came pouring in. One large room up stairs was cleared for dancing, and every foot of the floor was occupied till after eleven o'clock by nimble feet flying around to the music.

The people of C—— seem to think that they assemble together for something else beside eat-

ing and drinking, for though the dining-room was thrown open, and the table bountifully spread with cake, wine, creams, and other things more substantial, it was never crowded as we see the tables at parties in New York.

Good Mrs. Richards seemed perfectly ubiquitous, but most in her glory in the dining-room, where she presided over the coffee-urn with gracious dignity. She occupies a comfortable room in a pleasant part of C——, and has as much sewing as she can do, for which she is well paid. Her devotion and gratitude to Ada is almost unbounded.

But I have forgotten about the bride's dress, the last thing to be neglected, I know. It was of a plain white silk, rich and heavy, without ornament of any kind, except a *bouquet de corsage* of orange flowers and clematis. A wreath of the same flowers fastened the superb Brussels lace veil, which you sent to Ada, on her head. Horace gave her a superb set of diamonds and pearls, but she would not wear a particle of jewelry. Mrs. Blanchard has given as a bridal present a crimson camel's-hair shawl, that will make half of the "upper ten" gnaw their lips with envy.

As to father's pile of bank bills, I suspect that most of them will be left in C—— in the shape of comforts for some of Ada's poor charges. She has certainly received no present which has given her so much pleasure, for in this way she has been fully enabled to gratify her native-born benevolence.

George and myself will leave in a few days for New York. I am anxious now that our home is ready to get into it. As to the bridal party, there is no knowing when they will return, not before the latter part of October, I suppose. They all went off in high spirits, though Horace and Ada seemed to think that it would be a formidable piece of work to keep three such turbulent spirits as Ella's, Maggie's, and young Hazleton's in order. Maggie Hazleton is to spend the winter with Ada.

It seems that Mrs. Blanchard has refurnished the house entirely in magnificent style, reserving but two rooms for herself with their old-fashioned furniture. This troubles Ada exceedingly, who cares a great deal more for her mother-in-law's love and comfort than for rosewood and brocette, but Horace said that Mrs. Blanchard would not listen to his representations on the subject, so he was obliged to give up.

I suppose we shall not see you till after the fancy ball is over, though I should think the sea breezes rather cool now.

What is the rumor about Louise's flirtation with that fellow who styles himself the Count

de Monthin? George declares that from the description, he is sure that he is the same man whom he saw on the steps of the "St. Nicholas" just before we left home, and who was a barber in the *rue de Richelieu* at Paris, and a most expert thrower of "the bones."

I am, dear mother, your affectionate daughter,
GERTRUDE HINTON.

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THE FIRST PARTY.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

For weeks the house of Brellington, root and branch, had been in earnest consultation over the "coming out" of the only daughter. They were an important family—important in themselves and in their influential connections; and it seemed strange that an important, consequential-looking woman like Mrs. Brellington should be called "mother" by such a delicate snow-drop as Ella.

The Brellingtons, with their city palace and all proper appurtenances, were at the head of the very elite; and Mr. Brellington was the leading member of a clique of choice spirits endowed with too much intellect and soul for the aimless character of mere fashionable men. Ella Brellington, therefore, could not "begin the world" under more favorable auspices. But *is was* provoking, as her mother thought, that the child should be so thoroughly a child, and so obstinately indifferent to the triumphs that awaited her. Mrs. Brellington had in her younger days been a reigning belle—*was* a belle still; but she was quite willing to resign her throne to the youthful beauty who now engaged all her hopes and plans.

It was so unfortunate, though, that Ella should have no particular "style." Mrs. Brellington's characteristics had been expressed by the terms "magnificent," "distingue," "queen-like;" but Ella was neither haughty-looking nor hoydenish-looking—she was neither a romp nor an icicle; but simply a bright, enthusiastic girl, who was sometimes in gay spirits and sometimes in dull ones, and who would never have distinguished herself as an actress from her incapacity of maintaining the same *role* for any length of time.

Mrs. Brellington was in despair; just as the drooping eyelids and sweet sadness had made her an Ophelia, a gay, mocking expression and laughing eyes transformed her into a Rosalind—then came the noble countenance of Portia, and the reckless, defying Beatrice. That lovely young face was a perfect kaleidoscope of expressions, and Mrs. Brellington was sadly afraid that her only daughter would fail of making a sensation.

The proud father, however, was delighted that his rosebud preferred the subdued light of home to the glare of fashionable assemblies; and the two spent many pleasant hours in the library—hours that should have been employed by Ella in

listening to her mother's instructions. But lately these conferences had been interrupted; one might have supposed that Mrs. Hauteville's party was the only one that would ever be given—that it would enjoy as melancholy a distinction as the last rose of summer; and Ella raised her violet eyes until they were perfect notes of interrogation, when her mother impressively observed:

"Recollect that on this, your first appearance in 'the world,' depends everything."

"Don't recollect any such thing!" exclaimed her father, "upon this 'first appearance' depends nothing but the certainty of your having more beaux than you can possibly talk to, and hearing more nonsense than you can possibly understand. And now let us take a visit to the bowling-alley—you look fairly bleached for want of exercise."

The next moment they were flying down the path, and Mrs. Brellington watched Ella's glowing face and disordered hair with a conviction that her praiseworthy efforts in that daughter's behalf were entirely wasted.

The important evening arrived, and Ella was placed under the hands of the French maid hours before it was necessary. Upon the subject of her toilet all had had something to say; and yet such was Mrs. Brellington's tact that none felt offended at the rejection of their proposals.

There was Miss Jerusha Brellington, a rich, spinster aunt of Mr. Brellington's, who was a perfect terror to her relations from a habit of hunting up causes of offence and making a fresh will at least once a week. She had lost a lover in her younger days, by testing the strength of his affection in various unique ways that have not transpired. This lady, having produced a thick, brocade silk, that fairly stood alone from its very richness, with some magnificent old lace, that looked as though it had just been baptized in coffee, "took the chair" and held forth upon the mighty things that had been done by herself in that snuff colored brocade. She concluded by observing, in a manner that expressed her conviction of being accommodating to a fault, that "she would allow the dress to be taken in for Ella, and, perhaps, *modernized a little!*"

Ella's tip-toe height was only an inch above five feet, and her two arms would scarcely fill one ample sleeve of Miss Jerusha's dress; therefore

she laughed in the very face of her scandalized aunt in uncontrollable merriment.

Mrs. Brellington would as soon have equipped the pretty debutante in one of her drawing-room curtains, but she wisely remembered that the self-important spinster had property to "give and bequeath;" so she laid her hand on Miss Jerusha's shoulder, and looking down into her face, with an expression that seemed to be saying: "You generous woman!" she replied, in the most grateful of voices.

"Dear aunt, this is really *too* kind!"

"Don't mention it," said Miss Jerusha, looking as though her niece *ought* to be too full for utterance.

"We all know how *much* you prize that elegant dress—" Miss Jerusha turned it over and regarded it affectionately, "but even *my* partiality cannot consider Ella as suitably attired in any dress that has been graced by *you*."

Miss Jerusha looked reflective, and encountered her niece's eyes in the mirror.

"We all know what *you* must have been in that dress," proceeded Mrs. Brellington, in a touching manner, "you have kindly given us a description of your appearance, thus attired—and do not, my dear aunt, for one moment imagine that we cannot appreciate you without such sacrifices. Believe me that I shall be far better satisfied with Ella in a toilet more adapted to her humbler charms than if she were attired with the unworthy attempt of aping that which is so far above her."

Miss Jerusha looked triumphant, as she departed with the treasured brocade; and that very evening she remade her will in favor of "her dear niece, Sarah Brellington."

The next attack came from grandmother Brellington. The old lady had set her heart upon seeing Ella decked in a pair of pearl ear-rings, a garnet necklace, and a brooch of turquoise and diamonds. The articles were exquisite in the fashion of a bye-gone time; but Mrs. Brellington, who had a nervous horror of things that didn't match, adroitly replied:

"We really do not deserve so much kindness! But, my dear madam, you must not tempt me with a sight of these beautiful ornaments, for Ella is such a careless little thing that I cannot allow her to wear them. Think how I should feel if she returned without that exquisite brooch, or if the drop of one of those lovely ear-rings should be missing!"

Grandmother looked frightened; they were too valuable to be lost, and she hastily replaced them in their cases—saying, as she did so:

"Well, well—we must try to console the child for her disappointment."

But Ella was not even aware of the existence of the ornaments, for during the discussion she had been deeply absorbed in the pages of "Henilworth."

She certainly *was* a strange child; and so thought her mother as she entered her room on the night preceding that eventful evening. The apartment had been furnished by a mother who was both able and anxious to gratify every fancy of a beloved child; and articles of beauty were grouped around in charming confusion.

Ella was asleep; and Mrs. Brellington approached the richly carved bedstead with its pink and white draperies, and stood watching the slumberer, as she had often watched in bye-gone years. She glanced at the small, white hand that rested on the counterpane, and started at the sight of a slender ring of gold, in which was set a small ruby heart. She had never seen the ring before—who could have given it to her? It looked most suspiciously like a *gage d'amour*, but it might prove nothing more alarming than a *gage d'amitie*. "Some school girl token, I suppose," thought the watchful mother; but she determined to question Ella upon the subject.

The next morning Ella blushed and hesitated beneath her mother's searching glance; but at length she replied:

"I have had it for some time—I got it at aunt Sarah's."

"Did aunt Sarah give it to you?" continued Mrs. Brellington.

"Please don't ask me now, dear mother!" replied Ella, in great distress, "I will tell you all about it to-morrow."

Mrs. Brellington was anxious to hear the whole story at once; but Ella coaxed, and the wary mother, reflecting that "a scene" might materially interfere with her hopes and expectations for the evening, prudently dropped the subject for the present.

Poor Ella! It was with a heavy heart that she surveyed the party preparations; and while trying on her wreath, her busy thoughts conjured up a background of grand, old trees and summer skies—and another hand than hers twined wreaths of violets gathered beside the old brook. For in her heart the poor child carried a secret that had not even been unfolded to her indulgent father; a something would rise up to choke her on the very eve of an unuttered confession. So all that day she roamed vaguely through the house; and when her eye fell upon the ruby heart, her own grew heavy.

Years ago, when Ella Brellington was a sickly, half neglected child, she had been confided to the care of Mrs. Brellington's aunt—a kind-hearted,

energetic woman, who would now-a-days be termed "strong-minded," from the fact of managing her own farm. After a short sojourn at "aunt Sarah's," it would scarcely have been possible to identify the delicate child with the rosy romp who delighted to climb fences, swing on gates, and do everything else not usually found in books of etiquette for girls.

Ella's rapid progress in such accomplishments was doubtless owing to her boy-companion, Lindley Mellwood, who seemed to have taken root at aunt Sarah's before the young lady's arrival. He was the orphan child of a much-lamented friend; and aunt Sarah insisted upon his making her house his home. Lindley remained in obedience to her wishes; but having a more than common share of enthusiasm and love of adventure, he determined, before long, to carve out his own way.

The little, bright-eyed Ella soon mingled with his dreams—and while the child sat playing with the daisies and buttercups, he loved to picture her in all the graces of beautiful womanhood—they two setting forth, hand in hand, upon the pilgrimage of life.

Lindley was very much given to repeating poetry; and while indulging such visions, he was sure to think of those beautiful lines of Longfellow's:

"Not as a *child* shall we again behold her,
For when, with rapture wild,
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child!

But a fair maiden in her father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace,
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion,
Shall we behold her face!"

One day, when Ella was about fourteen, her mother suddenly remembered her existence—a circumstance nearly forgotten in Mrs. Brellington's unending round of gayeties—and the absent daughter was forthwith recalled. Lindley had before this departed "to seek his fortune," as the fairy tales say; but there had been quite a scene in the old grape-arbor—and Ella emerged from the interview the possessor of the ruby heart, which she had purchased at the price of her own.

Aunt Sarah yielded up her charge, little deeming that "the baby," as she still called her, had had the audacity to become *engaged*; and Mrs. Brellington received her without a doubt that, except in the matter of health and the natural change effected in five years, she was in all respects the daughter whom one of aunt Sarah's country neighbors had pronounced her "too lazy to raise."

This was the episode in the young life of Ella

Brellington that threatened to cloud all her future days.

Mrs. Brellington, though a skilful manoeuvrer, was foiled in her turn. She had determined that Ella's first appearance should at least be characterized by magnificence; and for this desirable end she had procured an elegant white satin dress, brocaded with silver, and had her own rich diamonds splendidly reset; but papa declared that "he would not have his perfect little piece of statuary overloaded in this heavy style." So he and Ella put their heads together and between them composed a dress which Mrs. Brellington at once vetoed as "romantic-looking."

But papa persevered, and Ella entreated; and with considerable reluctance the French assistant arranged the folds of lace beneath which glistened the satin under-skirt. Bouquets of violets looped up the over-dress, and one purple cluster fastened the folds of lace at the bosom; while a wreath of the same contrasted prettily with the golden colored hair of the wearer. Even the disappointed mother acknowledged to herself that the smiling, young party-goer looked wondrously lovely; while papa contemplated her dress with rapture, as entirely his own work—although, had Ella followed his directions *implicitly*, her appearance would have been decidedly unique.

Mrs. Brellington had, unfortunately, injured her foot in a manner that prevented her from using it; and after watching and tending it in vain for Mrs. Hauteville's party, she was reluctantly obliged to consign Ella to the care of another chaperone. Mr. Brellington was to accompany his daughter; and in the dressing-room they were to meet an old friend of mamma's who was delighted to usher in the radiance of this new star.

Ella, beautiful as a dream, or the genius of spring, as she sat there decked with violets, thought sadly of the morrow's confession and scarcely raised her eyes to the many faces in the room—the property of various relatives who had assembled to pronounce their judgement upon her appearance.

Aunt Jerusha kindly observed that "she would *pass*"—and then reflected what a splendid change would have been produced by the snuff-colored brocade. Grandmother Brellington thought that she "really did very well," but sighed as she remembered the beauties of her own day, and how they had degenerated; "*then*, a person must really *deserve* the distinction of belle-ship—*now*, a *little* beauty, a great deal of brass, a fantastic style of dress, and numerous unmeaning airs and graces did the thing at once."

Other less important judges were enraptured with the fair vision who sat absorbed in a silent

contemplation of her bouquet; and Mr. Brellington, after surveying her from all points of view, observed in a tone half earnest, half ironical.

"Your *first party*, Ella! Your first introduction to the gay world—I think that is the phrase—and to friends who will commence their good offices by criticising your dress, disapproving your style, and insinuating that the diffidence of the debutante is, doubtless, the skill of the practised tactician."

"But I am wrong," he added, as his face resumed its pleasant expression, "to give you this 'peep behind the scenes,' when more agreeable thoughts might occupy our hour of waiting. I was just thinking of my 'first party,' and the rather original ideas which, at that tender age, I attached to merry-makings. I was then just fourteen; and was to have the honor of accompanying my sister, two years older, in the character of beau. I had been dressed for some time; and impatiently perambulating up and down, as I beheld one curl after another slowly emerge from its paper-chrysalis, I began to fear that my companion never *would* be presentable, and I exclaimed at length:

"Oh! sister! *Do* make haste! The party will certainly be *in* before we get there!"

"Whether I had visions of a demolished supper-table—expecting the first arrivals to make a hungry descent upon the viands—or whether I was tormented by the apparition of a room full of dancers, and no resting-place for the soles of our feet, I do not remember; but my appeal, instead of hastening matters, proved fatal to the already arranged curls, and it took my sister some time to recover from a fit of laughter."

"My first party," said Mrs. Brellington, "was a rose surrounded by thorns. I was young in such things, then, and my mother had just bought me a particularly handsome, round shell-comb, to keep back my hair. I had broken several before, and was strictly charged not to remove this from my head during the evening.

"Eve, however, couldn't be contented in Paradise, without knowing how *those* apples tasted; and before long, I was boasting to my companions of the wonderful *stretching* qualities possessed by that comb. Upon the principle that 'seeing is believing,' I attempted to illustrate my assertion; but as I sat pulling the elastic shell, it suddenly snapt in two—and I remained for some moments overwhelmed by the thoughts of *punishment*. But at the supper-table a bright idea struck me: mamma, I knew, was fond of macaroons, and watching an opportunity, I slipped half a dozen in my pocket for a sin-offering.

"I presented these and the broken comb

together; but, instead of being appeased, mamma was perfectly horrified—and I am quite certain that the severest punishment I *ever* received was given more for my *vulgarity* than for my disobedience."

"I shall watch your pocket this evening, Ella," said her father, laughingly, "to see that no contraband goods are slipped into it. I think, though," he added, "that you are more in danger from love-letters than confectionary."

Ella's face was perfectly crimson, and complaining of the heat, she walked into the conservatory; but her father soon joined her to ask an explanation of this singular emotion.

She told him *all*, but the expression of his countenance puzzled her. He looked neither surprised, nor grieved, nor angry.

"Unfortunately for your candor," said he, at length, "I have heard very much such a story before. Tale-bearers are to be found everywhere; and the friend who informed me of your singular penchant was by no means a *disinterested* one."

Could aunt Sarah have been in the arbor on that eventful afternoon? Had she related, then, their conversation? Ella's face wore such a look of distressful interrogation that Mr. Brellington was quite moved by it.

"I am ashamed of you, Ella!" said he, with a merry light in his eyes, "you are a perfect disgrace to the sisterhood! After being 'got up,' regardless of trouble or expense, to go forth and distinguish yourself in the peculiar line of practise 'sacred to young ladies,' you remorselessly give a death-blow to the hopes of your sanguine relations by acknowledging yourself to be a perfectly *heartless* individual—having parted with the same to a harlequin of a young man, who seems to have distinguished himself in your eyes by turning somersets and climbing fences!"

"Oh, papa!" said Ella, reproachfully, "how can you?"

"I don't know, indeed," said he, "how I can—for you are, of course, pondering over the possibility of my consenting to smile upon this ridiculous love affair. Nought and nought never made anything when I was at school, so, how can you two expect to become *one*? For I had it, from the best authority, that your hero is as unencumbered with worldly goods as any romance reader could desire."

Ella was mercilessly pulling the camelias to pieces, but she looked up to say in *such* a tone: "Oh, papa! If you had only seen him!"

Mr. Brellington smiled and turned his head toward the door; but Ella thought his silence ominous, and mournfully followed him back to the drawing-room.

Aunt Jerusha was just fairly started (for the fortieth time) on the narrative of her "first party," which comprised the entire history of that wonderful brocade—a description of her whole personal appearance and powers of fascination—with other particulars "too numerous to mention"—when, to the relief of her auditory, the hall-bell was violently pulled, and all exclaimed: "There's the carriage!"

Ella stepped into the hall as the door was opened; but, instead of Thomas, she beheld an elegant-looking young gentleman, and a face which, though considerably altered, had often looked down upon her from the top of a tree, or gleamed roguishly out from loads of hay.

Lindley Mellwood stood gazing upon the young May queen, who had appeared so suddenly in silent admiration; while Ella neither screamed nor approached him; but in spite of the rudeness of the thing she retreated into the parlor, and sought refuge in the farthest corner. Provoked at her own folly, she sat waiting the result with feelings that were a perfect whirlpool of confusion.

The first words that fell upon her ear were an exclamation from her father of: "Lindley Mellwood! Is it possible? This is very unexpected!"

Then followed some communication in a low tone that she easily recognized; and Mr. Brellington entered the drawing-room with the guest—saying, as he presented him to his wife,

"Allow me to introduce a young friend of mine and an old playmate of Ella's—one who is dear to me as well for his father's sake as for his own."

Mrs. Brellington was too well-bred to show her surprise; but Ella felt more foolish than ever. She trembled and meditated an escape when her father approached with Lindley Mellwood; her confusion increasing as Mr. Brellington whispered, so that only the two could hear him,

"I am inclined to think, Ella, either that the touching story you just related to me was a little fiction invented for my amusement, or that I have been mistaken in the name. Did you not tell me that you were engaged to Lindley Mellwood?"

"Ella!" whispered a voice that thrilled her with old memories. She looked up—Mr. Brellington was deeply engaged in conversation with his wife, and the lovers soon got up a whispering in their retired corner, which showed that neither were familiar with the book of etiquette.

"After I left you," said Lindley, "I had a dreary, aching feeling at my heart that almost unfitted me for any exertion—but I knew that the prize could not be won without vigilant and active effort. Poverty is a hard task-master;

but as I plodded through with the weary routine of a lawyer's office, your image would often gild the dull books before me until, in my eyes, they became 'illuminated volumes.' You remember the old arbor, Ella?"

At this juncture, Lindley suddenly stooped to kiss a ruby ring that flashed before his eyes; but aunt Jerusha, who was sharp in such matters, was quite sure that the little, snow-flake of a hand on which it rested came in for at least a "lion's share" of the salute. The whispering was resumed.

"My adventures, you recollect, were not to appear piecemeal, like the chapters in magazines, but were to be condemned in one volume, before they were submitted to your inspection—or, in other words, dearest, my obstinacy and indomitable confidence in my own powers of success, made me refuse to give you the least clue to my wanderings until, like the heroes in fairy tales, I should return loaded with wealth and honors. But as time opened on, and no good genius came to my aid, I began to be weighed down by a sense of my delinquency in having inveigled a child like yourself into a clandestine engagement—conscience whispered that it was not *honorable*, and acting from a good impulse, I went to your father's office, and encouraged by his kind, sympathizing manner, told him the whole story. He looked grave at first—but having promised him never to see you without his permission, he praised what he was pleased to call 'my candor and sense of honor'—gave me both advice and assistance in my discouraging affairs—and concluded by telling me that my father had been an early friend of his, and that he had no doubt of my proving quite as worthy of his esteem.

"You may imagine, Ella, what a load was lifted from my heart by the interview, and how perseveringly I toiled after *that*. But ah! it was a difficult thing to keep my ridiculous imagination within proper bounds; in the midst of the most matter-of-fact employments, wild visions of adventure came galloping across my brain, and at one time I was quite beset by the idea of a pilgrim journey in the Bayard Taylor style—so taken was I with the handsome pedestrian in his pilgrim hat and blouse. But the shadow of a little fairy in a sun-bonnet was to be linked to mine to render these journeys desirable; and I began to fancy that papa might not altogether fancy these gipsy wanderings for his only daughter.

"I plodded on—wondering when and how all this would end; but one day I saw an advertisement in a daily paper for one Lindley Mellwood, who was requested to go somewhere and hear

something to his advantage. To oblige the advertiser I complied, and found to my great surprise, that by the death of a distant relative, I had become the possessor of an elegant residence, with horses, carriages, and other vanities, and a most liberal allowance of substantial bank stock. After being regularly installed in possession, I came to be absolved by your father from my promise.

"Our carriage is at the door, Ella—our home is pining after its mistress—when is our marriage to be?"

"Eleven o'clock!" said Mrs. Brellington, "why has not the stupid Thomas arrived? I told him to be here at *ten*."

"He came," replied her husband, mischievously, "but I told him that the carriage would not be required to-night."

To the great surprise of the family party, Mr. Brellington then published an "intention of marriage" between Ella and Lindley Mellwood; and "although Mrs. Brellington didn't know, upon consideration, that Ella *could* have done better, it was certainly provoking that her 'first party' should never come off, after all!"

Ella's chaperone waited in vain for her expected charge; but she was afterward informed that, on the evening in question, the young lady was "*very much engaged*" at home.

ALLIE.

BY WILLIE EDGAR PABOR.

"The dark arrow fled
In the moon."—SHELLEY.

THE bow of the universal archer sprung at his touch; the arrow sped like the lurid flash in the midst of a summer storm; and another flower of regal loveliness lay sere upon the floor of Time: one sheaf more was garnered in the great charnel house. Alas! poor Allie.

The cool zephyr flitted through the open casement, and, seemingly horror-struck at the scene presented, hastened with invisible steps from the place, murmuring that so bright a star should fall from its high eminency.

With white hands folded lovingly over her bosom; a fillet of flowers upon her Parian brow; and robed in spotless white, Allie lay ready for the grave; while those who watched by the side of the dreamless sleeper, fancied they heard the rustling of angel wings in the air around and above them. Time gathered the winged hours in his fold, and covered the mantle of the past over them, thus hiding their dark tableau from the gaze of mortals; the hour came when Allie was to be consigned to the City of the Silent; with tears and sighs she was laid low beneath the sods of the valley. Willows bent mournfully over the hallowed spot, and her companions scattered white blossoms upon her grave.

She was loved too well; her hours were too holy to be "long drawn out" upon earth; on our wondering visions "she came like the moon from the cloud in the east; loveliness was around her like light. Her steps were like the music of songs."* The void left in numerous breasts will never be tenanted as erst, and memory alone shall sit where the form of Allie was enshrined—recollections of the past will tint the present, and irradiate the future. But let us retrospect.

FIRST PICTURE.

"Didst thou but know the inly touch of love,
Thou wouldst as soon go kindle fire with snow,
As seek to quench the fire of love with words.

"I do not seek to quench your love's hot fire,
But qualify the fire's extremest rage,
Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason."

SHAKESPEARE.

THERE sat in a wildwood bower, where the

* Oasian.

woodbine trailed up the branches, and ivy dressed the rugged oak in vernal habiliments, two persons—one a youth, the other a maiden. "One beautiful, both young."

"The sun," said the lady, "stoops not from his fiery chariot, as he rides with scathing steeds the interminable expanse above! The eagle, having plumed his wings, stoops not in his aerial flight to watch the mundane notions of an inferior bird! Why should you, with the talents you possess, sufficient to satisfy the aspirations of a mortal, stoop from the temple of fame, choosing rather to abide in a humble cottage, where nought but wild buds bloom around, and the perfumed zephyr flits warily over the golden grain? Look higher—higher!" and the lady, as she spoke, bent her eyes full upon the face of the poet (for he was one) and waited his reply.

"Aye, lady!" his tones were caustic in the extreme, and his whole soul seemed poured out as he spoke, "well said; but I have found a flower, that, though I long to soar higher, has brought me lowly at its shrine; it remains for you to decide whether this flower shall repose in my bosom—over a heart as true as ever beat in the breast of man, and as capable of adoring as the sun is of shining. I offer you my heart—dare I hope for your's in return?"

Silence reigned for a few moments; then in cold tones these words fell upon the ear of the young poet, transfixing him with astonishment and surprise:

"Do not ask me for my heart, for I have none to give. Blot out my name for that of another's more brilliant; let *love* be sacrificed to *ambition*; let it be your guiding star! its brilliant light will lead you onward, long after the former will have faded and gone out; seek its shrine, and there pour out your libation; think not of me, for I cannot love you. I admire you for your great talents, and will one day join the band of worshippers to award you the meed of praise, and the voice of ambition at the triumph of genius will be far more sweeter than the soft melody of love; the latter too soon fades into the lethargic air."

"And you love another?" queried her listener.

"I do! One great and noble; not that you are not, but for him I have preserved my store of love, and for none other!"

"And I——"

"Seek some other if you will; there are many who would be grateful for the preference—showing it by the homage of a life time. Yet—I would counsel you to let *ambition* be your only love—*fame* the goal to which your step should be directed, and the praise of the world will ring in your ears a grateful offering, as the laurel wreath graces your brow."

"And the hollow meed of praise will only reverberate through the chambers of a heart rendered desolate and lonesome by unrequited love. The crown of fame will have many a thorn concealed within its wealth of laurel, and they will pierce to the very vitals, ringing out as with leaden weight a monody of woe, drowning the murmurs of praise. A canker will be eating at my very soul, and, though the world may see a smile wreathing itself around my lips, they will not know that, beneath a gay exterior, there is a secret grief shading the soul of the poet with all the banefulness of the *Upas*, and as deadly as the vapors of the Eastern valley."

"Your picture is mournful—but one which, I opine, will never darken the mirror of life," was the reply, in calm tones.

"Never, say you? It will, and in its desolation its shadow will creep over your's, and you be enveloped in its deadly influence," and as he ended, the youth passed forth from the bower an altered being; the flow of love was succumbing to despair.

SECOND PICTURE.

"The lovely *Thais* by his side
Sat blooming like an Eastern bride,
In flower of youth and beauty's pride."

COLLINS.

SLIGHTLY different, but full as truthful as the former, is the picture here presented. How true it is "through what new scenes" some pass during the progress of "life's fitful fever;" but let me not moralize, for what is

"Soonest begun
Is soonest done."

Once more tones of love fell on the ear of the lady; this time they were received—listen:

"I have loved you long—and now tell you, for the first time in words, that my love is quenched; you have ever been the star that led me on, and now I bend at the shrine of the lovely and powerless asking if I dare hope! Ever since we first met there has been but

"One spell upon my brain—
Upon my pencil—in my strain,"

and but one look the loadstone that drew me on to love. Need I name the one? Tell me, lady, will the future be bright with the beams of your love, or are the hours yet to come to be enveloped in darkness?

Soft as the chiming of silver bells or the melody of elfin voices came the reply,

"I love none but you."

Short—but oh! how expressive; it was the first outburst of an affection pent up for a long time, and now that the stream had commenced moving—a mighty torrent gave evidence of its strength and told of mighty resources to supply the demand.

Yet, as a wind ruffles the placid bosom of a stream, or as darkness shades the sunny wave as it sinks in its billowy path, came the words of the unloved one, "And in its desolation its shadow will creep over your's, and you feel its deadly influence." It acted powerfully upon her mind, and her endeavors to shake it off proved powerless.

The dim and almost uncertain shadow was already creeping over the pure mirror; a mist was raising out of those words, enveloping her even now.

THIRD PICTURE.

"And all went merry as a marriage bell."

BYRON.

"They found *Ginerva* dead! if it be death
To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath;
With waxen cheeks and limbs cold, stiff and white;
And open eyes, whose fixed and glassy stare
Mocked at the speculation they had owned."

SHELLEY.

SOFT music floated through the chancel, and the voices of many a merry couple chimed in gentle cadence, as they waited the coming of the bridegroom and the bride.

The door swings wide open, and up the broad aisle they come; before the altar they stand, and now are heard the words of the minister as he utters the solemn injunction and repeats the service. The last word is spoken, and they are about to mingle with their friends, when lo! from the further corner of the chapel a person with blood-shot eyes, matted hair, and cheeks wan with despair, steps up before the astonished couple and assemblage.

Gazing around, he lets his eyes fall upon the bride with a ferociousness of expression that caused her to shrink back into the arms of her husband. Now the maniac, for such he is, commences singing; first it is low and plaintive; he speaks of love's birth and its bliss—then comes

the declaration of affection, and with stinging language he speaks of the refusal. Higher rises the strain, for he speaks of the lady's beauty; then changing again, with bitter irony he whispers her counsel and his despair. Yet again, in soft cadence comes another confession and the plighted troth; the scene changes once more to the bridal hour, while long and loud are the anathemas hurled by the mad poet on the faithless one.

But the sound ceases! See! he plucks a dagger from his girdle, and ere the hands of those around him are stretched forth to interpose, it is

plunged into his own bosom, while a wild cry of horror falls from the lips of those assembled; all but one joins the cry; that one is—the bride! gazing on the fallen one weltering in his own blood, she sinks to the floor by his side lifeless. With the name of *Allie* trembling on his lips, the mad lover passed into the shadow land.

This, reader, is the story of *Allie*. Mourn with us for her early fate—that darkness so soon overshadowed the bright and beautiful—coming like the storm King in his fury, with scathing influence. *Requiescat in Pace!*

THE ORPHANS FROM THE ALMS-HOUSE.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by Edward Stephens, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 346.

CHAPTER XI.

WHILE uncle Nathan and Mary were conversing in the porch, the two women within doors remained comparatively silent, till the storm rose almost to a hurricane. The gloominess of the night seemed to oppress them, and they sat before the hearth heedless that the fire had nearly smouldered out, leaving only a couple of large pointed brands of what had been a back-log, protruding from a bed of ashes, that grew whiter and deeper with each coal that crumbled away from them.

With her calf-skin shoes planted on each foot of the andiron, and her dress just enough lifted to reveal a glimpse of her blue yarn stockings, aunt Hannah sat gazing on the embers, with a countenance that grew stern and troubled as the storm raged more and more fiercely. Her knitting work lay upon the stand beside her; three of the needles formed a triangle, and the fourth was thrust through the stocking, in a way that betokened some strange tumult in the owner, for never, save when it was the sign of some great calamity, had aunt Hannah been known to lay down her knitting except at the seam stitch.

That some bitter trouble weighed upon her now was certain, for the thoughts that possessed her seemed bowing her person forward. She stooped heavily toward the fire, with her long flail-like arms clasped around her knees, not rocking back and forth as seemed most natural to the position, but immovable as the andiron upon which her feet rested, and sombre as the storm that shook the windows and howled down the chimney.

Salina occupied the other andiron. Her leathern shoes were tinged with mud about the soles, and a spot or two had settled on her white yarn stockings, which were slightly exposed at the ankles. But while aunt Hannah stooped forward, bowed down by thought, Salina sat upright as a church-steeple, with one elbow planted on each knee, and her sharp chin supported by her two palms. Faint flashes from the brands now and then gloomed across her hair, firing it up with

ferocious redness; and her eyes were bent upon the broken back-log, as if defying it to competition, while her feet were planted on the andiron.

At last, when the storm grew so fierce that it rocked the old house to its foundations, and gusts of rain came sweeping down the chimney, the two women looked into each others eyes.

"Did you ever see anything like it?" said Salina.

It was an exclamation only, but aunt Hannah answered as if her thoughts had been questioned.

"Yes, once—that night!"

"True enough—that was an awful night. I hate to think of it."

"But how can one help it?" said aunt Hannah, bending her white face downward again, "I'd give anything on earth to forget that one night."

"Well," answered Salina, "I have sort of forgot a good deal about it; but now, as you bring it to mind, there was a thing or two happened, that I never told of before, and couldn't account for in any way—that is for the whole of it."

"What was that?" questioned aunt Hannah, sharply.

"Well now, it's no use snapping one's head off, if the night is howling like old Nick himself," answered Salina, kindling up.

"If I was snappish, it wasn't because I meant it," said aunt Hannah, sinking to her dejected position again, "you said something about that night—what was it?"

"Well now, I'll up and tell you—it's nothing worth mentioning—but somehow I always sort of remembered it. You know, after poor little Anna died, I went home in all the storm, for I had only run over to tell you about Mrs. Farnham's baby, and hadn't expected to stay. I couldn't but just get along; the wind and rain beat in my face so; and somehow what I had seen here took away all my nat'ral strength; besides it was dark as pitch; and before I got home there wasn't a dry thread on me. Well, I went in through the back door, mighty still, I tell you, for I didn't want any one to know that I'd been

out when there was sickness in the house. Besides, I'd promised the nus to sit up and tend the baby, while she got a little sleep. So, without stopping to bolt the back door, or anything, I jest stole up to the chamber next Mrs. Farnham's, where the nus was with the baby, and opening the door a trifle told her to go to bed and I'd be down in less than no time.

"The baby was sound asleep in the cradle, that had been ready for it ever so long, so the nus just put the blanket a little more over its head and went out.

"I ran up stairs, got off my wet clothes, and went down to the room agin, but first I remembered the back door and went to fasten it, before any one found out that I had been away from home.

"When I got to the door, it was wide open, and the wind came storming in like all possessed. The candle swirled till it almost went out in my hand, and I was as much as I could make out to shut the door and get things to rights, without being wet through agin. At last I got the door shut to and fastened, but when I went to cross the kitchen, where I never would let them put a carpet down, you know, the floor was tramped over and over with wet footsteps. Now, I hadn't crossed it but once with my wet things on, and the footsteps went both ways, as if some one had gone in and went out agin. Well, I held down the light and followed these same steps along the carpet clear into the room where the baby was; I hadn't gone across the threshold, remember, and yet the steps were all over the room, and a little puddle of water lay close agin the cradle—are you listening, aunt Hannah?"

"Go on," answered the old woman, in a husky voice.

"I haven't anything more to say, only this," said Salina, "the baby lay snug in the cradle, but its little hands were as cold as stone, and I'm sartin there was a drop of water on its forehead. That wasn't all. As I was looking around, I saw a little baby's night-gown a lying half across the door-sill."

Aunt Hannah looked up suddenly, and Salina checked herself.

"Good gracious, how pale you are!—do tell—what's the matter?"

"You heard the thunder—I always was afraid of thunder."

"Yes," answered Salina, "lightning don't amount to much, but when thunder strikes it is awful. That clap wasn't nothing to speak of, though, after all."

"Wasn't it?" said aunt Hannah, dropping her face between both her hands. "It seemed terribly loud to me."

"Well, as I was a saying about that night. There was a baby's night-gown on the door-sill. I took it up and looked at it. It was fine cotton, edged round with a little worked pattern, such as I'd seen our Anna working there in the out room. The sight of it sort of puzzled me, I can tell you, besides it made me feel bad to think how cold her poor little fingers were then, so I sat down and cried over it all by myself. But how came the little gown there? It didn't belong to Mrs. Farnham, for her baby's clothes were all linen, cambric and lace, and French work. I sat down and thought and thought, but at last burst out a crying agin. It was all clear enough."

"How," said aunt Hannah, lifting her face suddenly, "how was it clear?"

"Why, the night-gown must have stuck to my shawl when we laid Anna's baby in your bed up stairs. Everything was tossed about, you know; and I always am catching to briars and things every time I move. Never could go a blackberrying with other gals, but the first thing they were calling out, 'that Salina had got a beau,' and there would be a great, long briar dragging to the bottom of my frock. It was my luck always to have things hanging unto me. I wish you could see the ticks and burdock leaves that I have jerked off from this identical dress since harvest."

Aunt Hannah drew herself up a little more freely, but it was some moments before she spoke.

"Did you keep the night-gown?" she inquired.

"Yes, I hadn't the heart to bring it here at the time, so I locked it up in the till of my chest, and there it lies yet, as yellow as saffron. Would you like to have it now?"

"No," answered aunt Hannah, "what should I have it for; keep it safe just as it is; who knows but it may be wanted yet?"

Salina drew herself firmly up, and observed that if the best man in Green county was to offer himself to her, he would get sent about his business in double quick time.

Aunt Hannah raised her eyes, with a heavy questioning look, but dropped them again without in the least comprehending the drift of Salina's thoughts.

"No, said the spinster, stoutly. "It's of no use looking at me in that way, if every hair of his head was hung with diamonds, I wouldn't have him. It's no use asking me, I'm a set creature where I am set, aunt Hannah."

While Salina was moving her head up and down, with a force that almost dislodged the horn comb from her fiery tresses, a clap of thunder shook the house to its foundations, and sheets of lightning rushed athwart the windows.

"Nathan, where is my brother Nathan?" cried aunt Hannah, starting to her feet.

"No, it's of no use calling even him," persisted Salina, unmindful of both thunder and lightning. "The face of man can't change me, you needn't call him, I tell you it's of no use, I'm granite."

"The old hemlock is in flames again!" cried aunt Hannah, rushing through the porch, "and Nathan's chair empty. Is this for him? Nathan! Nathan!"

By the light of the stricken hemlock, she saw her brother coming toward the porch, holding Mary Fuller by the hand.

"Come, brother, come!" she cried, stretching forth her arms, "you are all that I have left."

Nathan heard his sister, and came toward her. She saw that he was safe, and her old manner returned.

"Come," she said, opening the kitchen door, "it is time for prayers."

"Yes, let us pray," said uncle Nathan, solemnly, "for truly, God speaketh to us in the thunder and the lightning."

Salina, who had remained standing in the room, was so struck by the unusual sadness of every face around her, that for the time she forgot herself. There was something in uncle Nathan's face that she had never seen before, a depth and intensity of feeling that held even her rude strength in awe.

"Good night," she said, tying on her hood and folding a large blanket shawl over her person, "it's time for me to be a going."

"Not in this rain," said Mary, "you will be wet through."

"Well, what then? I an't neither sugar nor salt," she said, folding her shawl closer. "The old tree gives light enough, and as for a little rain I can stand that."

"It mayn't be safe to pass the hemlock, when it's on fire. I'll go with you till you get beyond that," said uncle Nathan, taking his great drab overcoat from a nail behind the door.

Salina drew the shawl with still more desperate resolution around her lathy figure.

"No, sir," she said, with emphasis, "after what your sister has been saying to-night, I feel it a duty that I owe to myself to go home alone."

"But this terrible weather," said uncle Nathan, holding his great-coat irresolutely in his hand.

"As I observed before," said Salina, "I'm neither sugar nor salt, sir, but granite, marble, or, if there is a stone harder than these, I'm that."

Uncle Nathan was too thoroughly saddened for contention; indeed he scarcely noticed the magnificent change in Salina's manner; and, if the

truth must be told, was rather glad to be left under the shelter of a roof, when the rain was rattling over it so fiercely.

"Well," he said, hanging up his coat again, "if you'd rather go home alone than stay all night, or let me go with you, of course I don't want to interfere."

"Thank you," answered the lady, tossing her head and snuffing the air like a race-horse, "I'm sure I'm obliged beyond anything. It's kind of good to let me have my own way."

Uncle Nathan looked at little Mary Fuller to gather her opinion of the unaccountable airs their guest was putting on, but the girl's heart was full of the story she had been listening to, and she sat by the table gazing sadly upon the floor, with one hand supporting her forehead. Aunt Hannah too had seated herself on the hearth again, and was gazing absorbed into the embers, Salina had poor uncle Nathan thus entirely to herself.

"Now," said she, "if you will have the goodness to turn your face toward the chamber door while I pin up the skirt of my dress a little, I shall be prepared to depart from this roof."

Uncle Nathan quietly withdrew into the porch, and sat down in his easy-chair. Salina would have puzzled him exceedingly but for the pre-occupation of his feelings. As it was the old man was rather sorry that she *would* go home alone, in all the rain, but his heart was too heavy for a second thought on the subject. I do not pretend to be a judge of these matters, but really I believe Salina was a little taken aback, when she came forth into the porch, with her dress nicely tucked up, and her shawl folded in a fashion that left one arm at liberty, and saw uncle Nathan sitting there in the dark, instead of standing by the cheese-press, hat in hand, determined as a man of spirit ought to have been after the trouble she had taken with the shawl. Nor do I pretend to say that she was disappointed, or anything of the sort, because Salina in her day possessed the very germ and root of a strong-minded woman of modern times, and we are shy of running counter to ladies of that class—all that we venture to assert is that she made a dead halt on the porch, looked up and down the garden, observed in an under-tone that "It was raining cats and dogs yet," devices by which a weak-minded woman might have insinuated that she had taken the subject of going home alone into consideration and thought better of it. Uncle Nathan instead of suspecting those things that we have been wicked enough to insinuate, seemed perfectly oblivious of the antique damsel's presence. At last she gathered up her raiment and

muttering, "Well, now, I never did!" was preparing to step from the porch, when the voice of uncle Nat arrested her.

"Salina, is it you? Come here, Salinal!"

Salina drew close to uncle Nathan's chair—very close considering the circumstances, and with a relenting voice answered, "Well, Mr. Nathan, I'm here—what is it you want to say?"

Uncle Nathan reached forth his hand. Salina unconsciously crept out from the folds of her shawl, in a sort of way as if she didn't intend to let the left hand know what the right was about.

"Salina," said uncle Nathan, pressing her fingers in his broad palm.

"Well, uncle Nathan?"

"My heart is full to-night, Salina, I feel almost broke down."

"Well now, don't take on this way. My bark is worse than my bite, you know that."

"You are a kind soul at the bottom, I always knew that, and have always been a friend to us, I shall never forget you for it."

I don't know as uncle Nathan was conscious of it, but Salina's hand certainly tightened around his plump fingers.

"You were kind to *her*, and I want to thank you for it."

"*Her!* Who are you talking about?"

"Our Anna. The night has put me so in mind of her. I've been talking about her to little Mary all the evening, and now let me thank you, for you were always good to Anna."

Salina drew her hand from uncle Nathan's, and folded it in her shawl.

"I hope I haven't hurt your feelings mentioning her suddenly, after so many years," said the old man.

Salina stood upright while he was speaking, but the moment he ceased, the dim light through the kitchen window revealed her wading through the wet plaintain leaves as she turned a corner of the house.

"She always was a kind creature," said uncle Nathan, moving his head with gentle compunction. "I'm afraid it come hard though to hear poor Anna mentioned, but I couldn't help it,"

With these meek words, half of sorrow, half of self-reproach, uncle Nathan went back into the kitchen. Aunt Hannah had gone up stairs, but Mary sat by the little stand, reading in the open Bible. She turned it gently toward the old man as he sat down, but he shook his head and motioned her to read aloud.

Mary had a clear, silver-toned voice, and she read with that natural pathos which true feeling always renders effective. That night there was depth and sweetness in her reading, that fell like the voice of an angel on the excited feelings of uncle Nathan. The storm was now hushing itself in the valley, and her voice rose sweet and clear, till it penetrated to the room above, where aunt Hannah lay.

Why had aunt Hannah absented herself from family prayer that night? Why did she, as the voice of that young girl rose to her ears, cower down in the bed, and nervously draw up the coverlet to shut those sweet tones out from her soul?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)